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Explaining Poverty: A Sociological Perspective on Causal Attribution

by

©

Raymond W. Pong

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is on lay explanations of social phenomena. Specifically, the thesis describes and discusses how causal interpretations of poverty change over time and vary among social groupings. It is an attempt to understand how such variations in causal attribution occur.

As a point of departure, it is argued that conventional social psychological research on causal attribution is too restrictive in its theoretical perspective and in the range of attribution behaviors it studies. As a result, the dominant psychological model that has been proposed to describe attribution behaviors – a logical information processing model – is at best a limited one. In order to broaden the scope of attribution research, we study how lay people explain generalized social phenomena instead of discrete behavioral episodes. We also propose an alternative theoretical perspective, the theory-dependent model of explanation, which sees attributions as largely informed by or grounded in the attributors' *a priori* theories, i.e., their preexisting knowledge, cultural norms, and socially shared beliefs and orientations. To pursue this theoretical formulation one step further, it is suggested that *a priori* theories are not isolated cognitive elements and could, in turn, be related to their structural determinants. This analytical approach implies that attributions must be understood in terms of the attributor's existential basis, and that the relationship between social reality and explanation is mediated by the attributor's *a priori* theories.

Two analytical tasks are performed to test this proposition: a longitudinal analysis and a cross-sectional analysis. The former examines variations in the explanation of poverty over time. The latter studies attributional variations among diverse social groupings. In both cases, variations in causal attribution are examined in relation to structural and ideological differences.

The longitudinal analysis traces how explanations of poverty evolved over time from the Middle Ages to the Great Depression. It is shown that each major historical period had a distinctive pattern of causal attributions with respect to poverty. The shifts in the way economic dependency was causally understood are found to be related to structural transformations and attendant ideological changes.

The cross-sectional analysis is based on data from the 1972 American National Election Study. The contemporary American social structure is represented by six identified groups: professionals, proprietors and farmers, upper working class, blacks, Southern working class, and college students. Statistical tests show that individuals who are differentially located in the social structure tend to espouse dissimilar ideological perspectives and are inclined to explain poverty differently. In addition, the relationship between social structure and explanations of poverty is largely mediated by ideological beliefs.

The weaknesses and contributions of the study are discussed. It is maintained that although the substantive content of the analysis is poverty, the study has broader theoretical implications. In particular, it provides considerable empirical support for the theory-dependent model of causal attribution and shows that explanations of social phenomena can only be adequately understood in their proper social contexts.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The utility of the causal principle was severely questioned during the first half of the present century as the result of two main trends of intellectual thought: the criticism of empiricist philosophers and the growing use in science of statistical and stochastic models. Some philosophers and scientists, e.g., Russell and Eddington, went as far as to suggest that the concept of causality had outlived its utility and that it no longer served any useful purpose in scientific discourse. It was proposed that laws and mathematical functions would take the place of causal thinking. But, as Bunge (1961) has pointed out years later, contemporary science has not displaced causality in the name of law. Similarly, recognition of the stochastic nature of all macroscopic laws has not led us to believe in uncaused events. It has merely shown that not all relations are causal ones. Toulmin (1970) has also noted that "the question of reasons and causes is still very much alive today. It arises as an analytical problem in philosophy, as a methodological problem in psychology, and in neurophysiology as a source of paradox" (p. 2).

The idea of causation is equally important and pervasive in everyday human activities. Explanation, in its most general form, is a ubiquitous behavior. We seek to understand why events occur and why they occur the way they do. We impute motives and intentions to others' behaviors. We explain to others our own actions. We rationalize, justify, defend, and make excuses. Although there are subtle differences in these types of behavior, they are manifestations of the same psychological process, i.e., the attribution of causes to happenings and phenomena. Intended to answer the question "Why?", they are attempts to make sense out of seemingly random events by relating them to prior occurrences and conditions, both real and unreal.

The range of attribution behaviors is wide. The somewhat vacuous explanations given to an inquisitive four-year old boy are causal attributions. So are the highly complex arguments given by a defence lawyer on behalf of the accused. Regardless of the degree of sophistication in the way causal attributions are made, they are important behaviors. They are important not only because they are pervasive, but also because they themselves could be the determinants of other behaviors. Our reactions toward others often depend on the motives we impute to their actions. Radical behavioralists even suggest that we often behave according to our interpretations of our prior behaviors or emotional state (see, e.g., Bem, 1967; Schachter and Singer, 1962). Policy makers formulate policies on the basis of the causes they assign to certain problems. This is why the study of attribution behavior has become a major area of research in social psychology. Attribution theorists seek to study how ordinary individuals understand their social world in a causal manner, the nature of the explanations, and the factors that determine the explanations.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Similar to other attribution studies, the present study is an attempt to understand the nature of explanation, to examine why people explain social phenomena the way they do. It differs from most other studies in that it examines an area of explanation that is often neglected by social psychologists and it proposes a new perspective in understanding how causal attributions are made. The point of departure is the recognition that there are different kinds of explanation – explanations made in different situations and for different purposes, and that there are many determinants of how explanations are made. The current state of attribution research is criticized for being too narrow in its focus. Social psychologists tend to concentrate on explanations of a single act or event, often elicited in a contrived experimental setting. In order to comprehend explanations, social psychologists tend to examine the cognitive processes of the subjects, particularly how they logically process information. While such research activities have been successful in advancing our understanding of the attribution process, the success is, at best, a partial one because of the restrictive nature of the research and the theoretical perspective. The present study attempts to fill some of these gaps by moving into a relatively uncharted territory.

This study focuses on a type of explanation that has attracted little attention from social psychologists – explanations of generalized social phenomena. In particular, our interest is in how individuals explain poverty. The phenomenon is generalized in the sense that we are not interested in why a certain individual is poor, but why poverty exists in society. In other words, we are interested in the causes of poverty in general. People are often called upon to explain generalized phenomena. They may be asked to explain not just World War I but wars in general. Individuals may be interested not only in the cause of death of a young native person, they may also be interested in why the native population have an abnormally high mortality rate. In fact, most scientific explanations are explanations of generalized phenomena. People's understanding of generalized phenomena is interesting because it often represents a synthesis of countless individual experiences or an inference from a particular event to events in general. As such, it presents special challenges to attribution theorists because the attribution process for generalized phenomena may be different than that for individual episodes.

It is the argument of this study that attribution is not an isolated cognition, unrelated to other cognitive elements. On the contrary, it is believed that explanations, particularly of significant social phenomena, are informed by one's beliefs and values. In other words, they tend to be part and parcel of one's subjective stock of knowledge. The interrelated cognitive elements in the subjective stock of knowledge which provide the basis for generating causal attributions form an *a priori* theory (Nisbett and Ross, 1980) or a vocabulary of motives (Burke, 1954). Since a person's subjective stock of knowledge is, to a large extent, socially determined, the study of attribution can be pursued one step further by analyzing its structural determinants. The adoption of this analytical approach allows us to bring social psychology and sociology more closely together. It is our belief that sociology has a unique contribution to make in the study of cuasal attribution. Particularly relevant is the sociology of knowledge which seeks to understand the social and existential basis of both theoretical knowledge and common-sense everyday knowledge (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973). It is argued that attribution behavior is not merely an intrapsychic phenomenon, it is also a social phenomenon. Thus, a theory of attribution will not be complete without taking into account the effects of broader social forces and processes.

The overall purpose of this study is to examine how the effects of social forces and processes can be incorporated within a suitably expanded theory of attribution regarding generalized phenomena, such as poverty. It is argued that prevailing ideological beliefs about human nature and social organization shape the manner in which people attribute the existence of poverty in society to particular causes and thereby explain its existence. Such beliefs are, in turn, portrayed as products of the structural organization of a society. Thus, ideological beliefs, in the form of an *a priori* theory, mediate the relationship between causal attributions and their social structural determinants. The main focus of the study is an examination of the relationships among these three factors.

The title of this thesis is "Explaining Poverty." The substantive content of analysis is poverty. But the emphasis is on "explaining," not on "poverty." The topic to be explained could have been peace, prosperity, or political corruption. Poverty was chosen as the substantive area mainly because of the availability of data and the author's familiarity with this area of research. Therefore, the purpose of this study is not to locate the "real" cause(s) of poverty or to evaluate the adequacy and validity of the explanations offered. The objective is to understand the act of explaining. What is to be explained is incidental.

A few words about the substantive content are also in order. Poverty can be defined as a condition of not being able to maintain an adequate level of living, the level considered necessary at a particular time and in a particular society. However, it is not an unambiguously recognized condition. Where one draws the "poverty line" is at best arbitrary, and the definition of poverty tends to shift from time to time and to vary from one society to another. There may not even be a consensus among various social collectivities within the same society. Neither the historical data nor the survey data used in the latter part of this thesis explicitly define the "poverty line." The definitions of poverty are taken for granted. Since the intent of the present study is not to uncover the "real" causes of economic deprivation but to examine lay explanations for what is seen as poverty, the absence of a uniform definition of poverty is not deemed crucial.

This study consists of two empirical analyses. The first one is a historical analysis, tracing the changes in the way poverty has been explained and discussing why such changes took place. The second is a statistical analysis of survey data. It examines how population groups that are differentially located in the contemporary American social structure explain poverty differently. While the former is a longitudinal analysis with temporal differences as its focus, the latter is a cross-sectional analysis with social differentiation as its focal point. Although the two analyses appear to be very dissimilar, both in substance and in methodology, they, in fact, can be seen as complementary analyses having the same objective. In the longitudinal analysis, the variation is over time; in the cross-sectional analysis, the variation is between population groups. In both cases, the intent is to account for variations in explanation in terms of ideology and social structure. It has been said that most survey analysis lacks a historical context or a temporal dimension. On the other hand, historical analysis often lacks precision and the ability to generalize. Yet, if used together, these two approaches can support one another. In addition, if the hypotheses posited in this study are borne out in both cases, the theory should receive added empirical support.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter II presents a critical review of major studies on attribution theory and the formulation of an alternative theoretical perspective on attribution behavior. On the basis of this theoretical perspective, a set of hypotheses are generated which stipulate the relationships between social structure, ideology, and the explanation of poverty. The empirical testing of these general hypotheses is reported in Chapters III – VII. Chapters III and IV form the first part of the empirical analysis – the longitudinal analysis. The main focus of this historical study is on the American experience. However, in order to provide a wider perspective, the analysis is extended to include a brief review of explanations of poverty both during the Middle Ages and in England from the fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. The Middle Ages and the early modern period in England are examined in Chapter III. The American experience is discussed in Chapter IV in four sections which deal with, respectively, the colonial era, the period from the Revolution to the Civil War, the period from the Civil War to the 1920's, and the Depression era. In each period, the structural influence, the ideological influence, and the modes of explanation employed are discussed in turn.

The next three chapters constitute the second part of the empirical analysis – the cross-sectional analysis. More specifically, Chapter V reviews a number of pertinent studies, discusses a strategy for testing the general hypotheses, and formulates a set of specific hypotheses for statistical testing. Chapter VI discusses the nature of the data, the sample, and the statistical techniques that will be used for the survey data analysis. The results of that statistical analysis are presented and discussed in Chapter VII. Chapter VIII summarizes the theoretical issues and empirical findings. A discussion was also made on the limitations and contributions of the study. Finally, suggestions are made regarding a number of research areas for further investigation.

II. THE NATURE OF EXPLANATION

The idea of causality is deeply entrenched in our daily lives. We tend to search for motivating forces for most of our actions and other people's behaviors. Kemeny (1959) has speculated that the search for causal laws is a reflection of our subconscious tendency to recreate the universe in our image. Similarly, Heider (1958b) has argued that we seek to fit our daily experiences into an interpretive framework which renders them meaningful and predictable. To this end, we impute dispositional qualities and causal connections to social reality. Such causal interpretations provide an efficient means to structure and comprehend the social world. Thus, causal thinking appears to be an ubiquitous phenomenon in our daily lives.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social psychologists have realized that to understand human behavior, they may do well to consider man's belief about causality and his way of making causal inferences. This is the basic concern of attribution theory. Attribution theory is interested in how lay persons explain social phenomena and the psychological process of causal inference. In short, it is the study of the cause-effect analysis of social phenomena made by the average person in everyday situations.

It is generally agreed that Fritz Heider is the pioneer in the area of attribution research. His seminal work on the imputation of intention and the making of dispositional attributions by "naive psychologists" (i.e., ordinary people attempting to make sense out of social phenomena) has paved the way for later, more elaborate analyses of the attribution process. The more important theoretical formulations include Jones and Davis's (1965) correspondent inference theory, Kelley's (1967, 1971, 1972) principle of covariance, and Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) Bayesian model of causal attribution. Most of the more important theoretical accounts of the attribution process can be grouped under what Maselli and Altrocchi (1969) call the "inference model," in which attribution is seen as a stepwise, logical processing of information cues. This dominant model of attribution analysis employs the analogy of the attributor as a naive information processor, a naive scientist, or a naive statistician.

In formulating his attribution theory, Heider derives much insight from Brunswik's lens model of perception. The attribution process, according to Heider (1958a, b), may be conceptualized as consisting of two separate phases: the selection of cues from the information provided and the making of causal inferences from these cues. The selection and integration of informational cues are analogous to Brunswik's perceptual processes. Just as the perceiving individual must coordinate the highly variable perceptual cues in the proximal representation to infer the relatively stable objects that give rise to them, the attributor must organize information cues in order to infer the more stable factors (the "causes") that generate them. Heider's formulation of the attribution process is essentially an information processing approach.

Similarly, Jones and Davis's (1965) correspondent inference theory is built on a rational, logical inference model. The authors concern themselves mainly with attribution to the person (the attributor himself or another actor) and with the establishment of the cause for a single behavior episode. Their main objective is to determine how confidently the cause of an act can be attributed to an underlying disposition. An inference is said to be highly correspondent if a perceiver has high degree of certainty that the actor's behavior reflects an underlying disposition. As Jones and McGillis (1976) have pointed out, the correspondent inference theory presents a logical calculus, in terms of which accurate inferences could be made by an alert attributor, weighing various factors such as knowledge, ability, noncommon effects, and prior probability.

Unlike the correspondent inference theory, Kelley's (1967, 1971, 1972) covariance principle is designed to provide global attributions either to the actor, the stimulus, or the circumstance in which the behavior occurs. In his analysis, Kelley distinguishes between situations in which ample information concerning the behavior in question is available and situations in which only sparse information is present. In the former situation, Kelley postulates that the attributor employs the covariance principle, which resembles J. S. Mill's method of difference in making causal inferences. The covariance principle involves a multidimensional matrix of information: distinctiveness, consensus, consistency over time, and consistency over modality. The distinctiveness dimension refers to whether the actor reacts to other stimuli in a similar or different manner. The consensus dimension refers to whether or not the same response is emitted by other persons in the presence of the same stimulus. The consistency over time dimension refers to whether the responses of the actor to the same stimulus vary over time. The consistency over modality dimension concerns whether the actor responds to the stimulus irrespective of the circumstances in which the stimulus occurs. According to this approach, causal inference is attained through the observation of covariations among variables.

If the naive psychologist has a single datum, Kelley suggests that the attributor will rely on what he refers to as "causal schemata." A causal schema is a general conception about how certain kinds of causes interact to produce a specific kind of effect. It refers to an abstract, content-free notion of formal relations among causes and effects (Nisbett and Ross, 1980). In statistical parlance, a causal schema is an assumed pattern of data in a complete analysis-of-variance framework. It is within this assumed configuration of data that the single observation is fitted and interpreted. To Kelley, an attributor is basically a naive statistician who must deal with a wealth of information in a manner analogous to the analysis of variance in order to identify the cause(s) of a behavior.

Two other theorists also treat the attributor as a naive statistician. Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) have postulated a Bayesian model of causal attribution. Individuals make causal attributions on the basis of information about an actor's behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein conceptualize attribution tasks in terms of Bayes' theorem which specifies optimal revision of beliefs in light of new information. According to this model, the amount of change in a given hypothesis is a function of the diagnostic value of the new item of information (i.e., of the likelihood ratio). The application of Bayes' theorem to causal attribution implies rationality and objectivity in the processing of information by the attributor.

On the basis of the above review, it is apparent that most of the major theoretical formulations on the attribution process see the act of explaining social phenomena as essentially a rational, logical processing of information. It is not that all causal inferences thus obtained are correct and unproblematic; attribution researchers are the first to admit the existence of attributional biases and misattributions (see Ross, 1978). But these are generally regarded as the consequences of inexperienced attributors not following the proper attributional rules and procedures, and of attributors being influenced by their personality traits (e.g., internal or external locus of control), succumbing to their ego-defensiveness and their love and hate, directing their attention to the wrong focus, etc. In other words, these are attributional anomalies that can be dealt with by making theoretical allowances or by expanding the theory to take into account the disturbance factors. Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), for instance, have proposed to treat attributional biases as factors influencing the likelihood ratio in Bayes' theorem.

CRITIQUE OF ATTRIBUTION THEORY

The inference model, which has generated a phenomenal amount of empirical research and has shaped the major theoretical formulations on attribution behavior, is also the source of some of the problems facing this area of research. Do individuals inevitably go through a lengthy, laborious process of information selection, weighing of cues, and logical deduction whenever they have to make an explanation? Do persons typically employ Kelley's "analysis of variance" strategy or Jones and Davis's "action-attribute paradigm" approach to come up with an explanation for a social phenomenon? Attribution theorists would like us to believe so. As Kruglanski et al. (1978) have indicated, "(a) fundamental assumption of attribution theory is that naive epistemology is similar in crucial respects to scientific epistemology.... This means that the lay person's epistemic encounters with the world are basically rational, although psychological biases may exist and introduce distortions into the process" (p. 299). Similarly, Ross (1978) has observed that one of the objectives of attribution theory has been the demonstration that, by and large, attributors follow the dictates of logical models in drawing inferences, assessing causes, and making predictions.

However, murmurs of doubt are becoming more and more audible. The logical information processing model is being challenged on empirical and theoretical grounds.

Notwithstanding his formulation of the Bayesian model of causal attribution, Ajzen has questioned the assumption that individuals employ sophisticated information processing strategies to predict and explain human behavior. Instead, Ajzen(1977) suggests that individuals tend to rely on rather simple intuitive heuristics in making their judgments. Intuitive heuristics are intuitive causal theories of events that guide the use of information for purposes of prediction and explanation. Ajzen's experiments show that subjects ignore certain information, including valid population base-rate information, and utilize only those items of information that can be incorporated within their intuitive theories of cause and effect.

More recently, Semin (1980) has raised stronger objections to the established mode of attribution research. He has maintained that the meaningful conduct of everyday life is based on the existence of common, known-to-all rule systems and a complex heritage of preinterpreted experiences. These rule systems and preinterpreted experiences, which are generally subsumable under the name of culture or custom, provide individuals in their daily lives with intersubjective guidelines to interpret events and behaviors. Therefore, if the object of social psychology is to understand how social explanations take place, it is imperative to study the nature and structure of this common stock of knowledge that is culture-bound and historical in nature. However, it is precisely these rules, conventions, and knowledge elements that attribution theory tends to ignore. Instead, attribution theorists construct a statistical model of man and assume that individuals make their causal attributions in a systematic and logical manner.

Nisbett and Ross (1980) have amassed a wealth of empirical information that challenges some major assumptions of conventional attribution research. Attribution theorists have been guided in their research by normative models of causal analysis, the most important and popular of which is Kelley's ANOVA paradigm. This normative model requires that individuals respond to each of the three dimensions (distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus) in making causal inferences. But there is impressive evidence that individuals more often than not deviate from such normative standards of inference. Nisbett and Ross point out that causal inferences that conform to normative standards are generally produced by impoverished stimulus materials that have been summarized for subjects in advance by experimenters. This research strategy, the authors argue, seems certain to inflate attributors' abilities to make rational and logical causal analysis in their everyday experience. Nisbett and Ross show that, in reality, individuals tend not to be expert naive statisticians and are poor at detecting covariations among events. Instead, the authors emphasize the importance of knowledge structures and prior theories in guiding causal analysis. Preexisting knowledge structures contain a person's beliefs, theories, and preconceptions about the world, which provide the basis for interpreting and assimilating new experiences and making causal inferences. They cite empirical studies to show that covariation assessments are more influenced by prior theories of expected covariation than by actual data configurations. Similarly, individuals' characterizations of themselves and their labelling of their emotional states are heavily based on prior theories and socially transmitted preconceptions about which antecedents produce which effects. Unfortunately, as Nisbett and Ross have noted, "(there) has been surprisingly little research on these beliefs and theories shared by the mass of people in our culture" (p. 30).

Conventional attribution theory is further challenged by Lalljee (1981) who has argued that the inductivist and information processing approach advocated by Heider and Kelley is, at best, a limited model. The author suggests that in most instances, attributors make causal inferences on the basis of hypothesis-testing rather than information gathering. An attributor usually has in advance a set of hypotheses about why an event occurred from the time he approaches the event. Rather than engaging in an inductivist search along the lines proposed by Kelley, the attributor tends to look for specific items of information to distinguish between his hypotheses, many of which embody culturally shared theories about the event. Only when the attributor has no adequate cultural theory for the event will he conduct an in-depth analysis along dimensions of consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness. Since many of the hypotheses are culturally derived, the relevance of historical and cultural contexts is of particular importance for the study of explanations. Different cultures not only have different sorts of explanations available for use, they construe the world and man in different ways. Thus, Lalljee advocates the shifting of focus from the exclusively "intra-personal processes" of conventional attribution research to a wider perspective that includes the analysis of the historical, social, cultural, and interpersonal contexts.

Two common themes run through these authors' criticisms of attribution theory. Firstly, their critiques aim at the overly rational inference model. It is not that individuals do not process vital information or are not capable of reasoning coherently when they are called upon to explain social phenomena. The argument is that the inference model is not the only model; and alternatives are available to individuals who are required to comprehend the social world. In fact, it is quite possible that in their everyday lives, individuals prefer to follow simpler attributional rules or even avoid making causal attributions most of the time. Therefore, the problem is not the veridicality of the inference model. The problem is its typicality.

Secondly, Ajzen, Semin, Nisbett and Ross, and Lalljee refer to the fact that the making of an explanation is facilitated by the existence of intuitive causal theories, preconceptions, cultural norms, customs, belief systems, and a common stock of knowledge, which help the selection and utilization of information, and provide intersubjectively meaningful interpretations of everyday reality. For the sake of convenience, we shall, following Nisbett and Ross (1980), call these facilitating factors *a priori* theories. They are preexisting theoretical framework from which causal attributions can be derived. More will be said about this in the following section.

Other criticisms can be offered. Social psychologists have tended to focus on a narrow range of attribution behaviors. As Lau and Russell (1980), among others, have shown, most attribution research asks some captive population (typically psychology undergraduates) to give causal explanations for their own or other persons' behaviors in hypothetical or fairly trivial situations. The need to achieve experimental control partly accounts for this style of research. But, in order to attain experimental control, the scope of attribution research is severely restricted. Hardly any attempt has been made to go beyond the laboratory, to go beyond dealing with contrived issues in contrived settings. Needless to say, little effort has been made to see if the attributional rules identified in laboratories are in fact utilized in other domains of human activities. As a matter of fact, the over-emphasis on the information processing model by attribution theorists could be due to the very limited range of attribution behaviors they examine.

Attribution researchers have generally failed to recognize the possibility that different realms of human concern may require different attributional rules and procedures. Do politicians and physicists attribute in a similar manner? In what way do journalists' explanations differ from those of jurists? Are the standards for evaluating the adequacy of attributions the same in different areas of human activity? Although very little research has been done in this area, there are some indications that universally accepted attributional rules may not exist. Collingwood (1940) pointed out that there are various kinds of talk about causation, each with its own appropriate analysis. He believed that causality is context-dependent. Similarly, Gorovitz (1965, 1969) has argued that as the objectives and procedures vary from one area of human concern to another, so will the principles guiding the process of making causal inferences, and so will the ways explanations are given. For instance, sometimes the task of making causal attribution is to single out one factor among a host of necessary conditions and to identify it as the cause of an event in order to assign legal responsibility or moral culpability. At other times, the task is to identify the entire set of conditions necessary for the occurrence of an event and to call these conditions the cause(s). This occurs when a more complete explanation is needed as in scientific investigation. In addition, in everyday social interaction, "accounts" are ritualistically offered to explain unexpected and untoward behaviors in order to smooth people's dealings with one another (Scott and Lyman, 1968; Hewitt and Hall, 1973). Such ritualistic, routine explanations seem to be different in nature from other modes of explanation.

Attribution theorists have also tended to overlook another major mode of attribution. In the typical attribution experiment, the subject is required to explain his own behavior or the behavior of another subject. Very rarely do social psychologists examine how individuals make attributions with respect to a class of events or behaviors as opposed to particular episodes. This is quite surprising in view of the frequency people are asked to explain generalized social phenomena. "Why do wars occur?" "Why do more and more marriages break up?" "Why is the economy going downhill?" These are some of the questions we encounter in our daily conversations, both serious and casual. It should be just as important to study how individuals explain the occurrence of wars as to examine how subjects attribute causes to X's performance in an experimental task. But apparently, attributions with respect to generalized social phenomena do not interest social psychologists or are beyond the capability of existing theoretical paradigms to handle.

By failing to pay appropriate attention to explanations of generalized social phenomena, attribution researchers have overlooked a wealth of information on attribution behaviors collected and studied by sociologists, political scientists, public opinion pollsters, and historians of social thought. These people often examine how the public attributes causes to various critical social issues, such as crime, poverty, racial inequality, and economic and political problems. They compare social groupings with respect to how such problems are causally interpreted and study the changes over time in the way these problems are understood.

In sum, it has been argued that a major problem of attribution research is the very narrow focus it has set for itself. Although it claims to study how the average person, acting as a naive psychologist, explains social phenomena in his everyday life, it has overlooked important modes of attribution behavior. It has failed to examine the possibility that different sets of attributional rules and procedures are in use in diverse areas of human concern. It has constructed theoretical formulations based on a rational and logical model of information processing. These theoretical formulations have been successful in generating a vast amount of empirical research, but their typicality is in doubt. Critics have pointed out that, at best, they describe a restricted range of attribution behavior.

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF ATTRIBUTION

The alternative model of explanation being proposed here is not intended to replace the inference model of attribution postulated by social psychologists. Instead, the two are seen as complementary. They are probably suitable for explanation tasks of dissimilar nature and are useful under diverse circumstances for different purposes. As pointed out earlier, individuals may be asked to explain a discrete behavior episode, or they may be required to explain certain generalized social phenomena. In some cases, there is considerable background information, on the basis of which systematic inferences can be made; in other cases, no specific background information is available.

Similarly, it was pointed out that different domains of human concern may require the use of different attributional rules and procedures. Thus, it appears that a number of models are needed to describe attribution behaviors under a variety of circumstances. The model to be presented in this section, it is believed, is a more appropriate one for describing how the average person explains generalized social phenomena in everyday situations with little or no background information available. For the sake of simplicity, this model will be called the "theory-dependent model" of causal attribution.

The point of departure in understanding lay explanations is people's desire to satisfy their curiosity, to provide answers, albeit not necessarily the best answers, to questions that bother them. Bridgman (1927), a physicist, has stated that the essence of explanation consists in reducing a situation to elements with which we are so familiar that we accept them as a matter of course, so that our curiosity rests. Similarly, Passmore (1962), a philosopher, considers explanations as attempts to resolve puzzlements. A puzzling situation, according to Passmore, creates unexpectedness that interrupts the smoothness of our dealing with the world. An explanation, if accepted, gets us moving again.

The crucial question is: What kind of explanation can satisfy our curiosity and resolve our puzzlement? Passmore has maintained that everyday explanation has no logical form peculiar to it. However, he has identified three characteristics of a good explanation: intelligibility, adequacy, and correctness. At the everyday level, any explanation is intelligible provided that "it relies upon a familiar sort of connection" (p. 112). In other words, we regard an explanation as intelligible if it refers to conditions that we know will most likely produce the given effect. In everyday life, we tend to accept an explanation as being adequate if it is intelligible; similarly, we tend to presume that an adequate explanation is a correct one.

Both Bridgman and Passmore mention the word "familiar" in their discussions. It appears that "familiarity" is the key to understanding the nature of lay explanation. That is, causal connections must be so commonplace that they are taken for granted and do not require further explication. Causal linkages become intelligible if they are consistent with or subsumable under a familiar framework of interpretation or a commonly accepted theory of why and how events occur. Shope (1967) believes that our causal judgments rely on a backlog of beliefs about what processes can take place and reflect our suppositions about the causal structure of the world. These beliefs are seldom in a coherent, systematic form. They are more likely to constitute a natural part of our cultural tradition.[1]

The theory-dependent nature of explanation has been given a more formalized treatment by Hanson (1955). He underscores the fact that a completely novel explanation is not possible. Explanations are deemed satisfactory only if they are "theory-impregnated." Causes appear to be related to effects because they are connected by theories that are generally taken for granted, and not because the world is held together by a kind of "cosmic glue." Thus, a cause-effect relationship becomes intelligible only against a comprehensive theory of some sort. This is true even in scientific explanation. As Kemeny (1959) has suggested, explanation amounts to demonstrating that the new fact we seek to explain fits into the general pattern of knowledge available to us. It is, in a sense, just what we would have expected.

Examining how historians explain historical events will help us understand the nature of lay explanation. This is because the standards of a good explanation in history stand closer to those of everyday life than they do to those of physical science.[2] Passmore (1962), as noted previously, has pointed out that at the everyday level, explanations are intelligible provided that they rely upon a "familiar sort of connection." A historian's criteria of intelligibility are precisely those of the ordinary person. He employs only such modes of causal connection which are already familiar in everyday life. If a historian uses economic or psychological principles in his explanations of historical events, this is only because he believes his readers are now well acquainted with these modes of causal connection. A historian cannot explain in terms of a theoretical generalization until it no longer needs to be defended. In other words, historical explanation, like lay explanation, depends on a common stock of knowledge and on *a priori* theories, i.e., preexisting theories that are generally taken to be true. By using commonly accepted theories to bring together or subsume historical events, historians resolve our puzzlements and satisfy our curiosity. Likewise, Pinkard (1978) understands historical explanation in terms of its relations to its theoretical basis. According to him, to explain a historical occurrence is to integrate it within a coherent conceptual structure. More specifically, it is to "redescribe" the historical event in terms of some theory that provides a more coherent understanding of the matter under investigation. Historical explanation can therefore be understood as either finding a place for something to be explained within our current set of beliefs and conceptual framework or modifying that framework so that novel facts can be accommodated.

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[1] Other writers have expressed similar views. According to Berlin (1966), an explanation is made if the thing or event to be explained is seen to form part of the taken-for-granted reality: "....to be active.... is *eo ipso* to be engaged in a constant fitting of fragments of reality into a single all-embracing pattern that I assume to hold for others besides myself, and which I call reality. When, in fact, I am successful in this – when the fragments seem to me to fit – we call this an explanation...." (p. 37). Similarly, as Morgan (1975) has put it, "....the quest for explanation is an attempt to impose order and coherence upon irregular, unpredictable and otherwise chaotic experiences and events. It is not however a social requirement that explanations should be demonstrably true; all that is required is that they should be accepted as true. In practice, this amounts to saying that **they should be consistent with other socially shared assumptions and beliefs** that represent regularity, order and sense" (p. 279; emphasis added).

[2] It should be noted that philosophers of history are still debating the nature of historical explanation and the covering law model. But a number of writers have put forth arguments on historical explanation which come close to the theory-dependent model of explanation.

The view that everyday explanation is theory-dependent is not entirely new to sociology. In fact, similar ideas have been discussed at some length by Mills (1940) and Gerth and Mills (1953). These sociologists were inspired by Kenneth Burke, a philosopher and literary critic, who introduced the notion of a vocabulary of motives. Motives can be understood as rationalizations of acts or as explanations given in order to make sense out of behaviors. Motives, according to Gerth and Mills (1953), refers to "the understanding and explaining of why and how human conduct takes a specific direction" (p. 113).

Burke (1954) has discussed how individuals acquire vocabularies of motives. In every society, Burke explains, there are prescribed and proscribed rules of conduct and a vocabulary of motives to go with them. A person is socialized not only with respect to what he should and should not do, but also in regard to the reasons for his behaviors. When introspecting to find an explanation for his conduct, he would naturally employ the motive terminologies that he has become familiar with through socialization. Individuals "learn" a vocabulary of motives which provides ready-made explanations for behaviors in their own contemplation and in their daily interactions with others.

Since motive terminologies are internalized by individuals in specific sociocultural contexts, they do not exist independently of the norms, values, and beliefs of a society or culture. As Burke (1954) has suggested, "(the) few attributions of motives by which a man explained his conduct were but a fragmentary part of this larger orientation" (p. 25). By "this larger orientation," he refers to the "framework of Weltanschauung as a whole." In other words, a vocabulary of motives is not an isolated mental product; it is a part of the general orientation of a specific society or of a specific sociohistorical period. Following this line of thinking, Burke has argued that the Freudian theory of motivation, for instance, is itself a vocabulary of motives which is part and parcel of the "sexual-bourgeois orientation" of nineteenth century Western Europe and the romantic and scientific views prevalent at that time. Another example illustrates Burke's argument regarding the relation between a vocabulary of motives and the Weltanschuung of a sociohistorical period. Referring to the psychoanalytic interpretation of Saint Augustine's life and work, Burke (1954) commented:

> The entire motivation by which Augustine lived and wrote is categorically discarded in favor of a few sexual impulses which can, at best, be shown to have been an ingredient in his motivation.... Non-sexual interests may be interpreted as the symbolization of sexual interests - but then again, sexual interests may themselves be considered as the symbolization of non-sexual interests. That is: since sexual matters are of great importance, a pattern of thinking may reveal itself noticeable in the patterns of sexual thinking. **What, except the strong sexual orientation of our society, in contrast with the strong religious orientation of Saint Augustine's society, determines which shall be called the true motive and which the symbolic accretion?** (p. 27; emphasis added)

The arguments presented thus far suggest two salient points. First, an explanation, in order to be intersubjectively meaningful in the everyday context, has to be theory-dependent. That is, the cause-effect relationship stipulated by an explanation has to be derivable from a comprehensive theory of some sort. This theoretical framework, on the basis of which explanations are made, is referred to as *a priori* theory. By inference, it can be said that explanations are not disparate mental products, unrelated to other cognitive elements. They are necessarily a subset of a larger constellation of ideas, beliefs, and knowledge, and should be seen as an integral component of a person's overall orientation. Second, *a priori* theories tend to have a ring of familiarity. Because they are commonplace, their validity is generally taken for granted and the "familiar sort of connection" derived from them is seldom challenged in the everyday context.

Otherwise, explanations appear unconvincing to the average person because they are incompatible with his conceptions as to how things and events should go together. It should be noted in passing that *a priori* theories need not be scientific in the real sense of the word. They could be based on myths, doctrines, or conventional wisdom. They could even be outside the awareness of the individual holding them in the form of what Bem (1970) calls "a nonconscious ideology." For the most part, *a priori* theories are grounded in a backlog of familiar beliefs and values, a common stock of knowledge, and the general orientations of a society.

Before proceeding to examine the theoretical implications of the theory-dependent model of explanation, we shall briefly discuss how attribution theory fits into this theoretical scheme. As the readers will recall, Semin's (1980) criticism of attribution theory is that it ignores the social conventions; rules, and common stock of knowledge that provide the basis for interpreting events and behaviors. In other words, Semin is charging that the explanations which social psychologists study are theory-independent, bearing no reference to the belief and value systems of the attributors and the general orientations of a society. The main thrust of Semin's critique is no doubt valid, but his charges may be slightly exaggerated. As a matter of fact, if we read between the lines of writings on attribution theory, we should notice that a lot of the attributions analyzed by social psychologists are indeed rooted in common beliefs and sociocultural conventions. Unfortunately, attribution researchers have seldom made this connection explicit. As well, they have not pursued the theoretical implication of this connection to its logical conclusion. We shall briefly review a few categories of attribution research to illustrate the fact that the theory-dependent model of explanation being here proposed is not incompatible with conventional attribution research.

Many studies have shown that, in Western societies, individuals are accustomed to attributing problematic behaviors of people to their personality characteristics. These "intuitive theories of personality" allow individuals to explain untoward conducts mostly in terms of psychological traits, notwithstanding the lack of predictive power of hypotheses based on personality attributes. Thus, dispositional attributions are, to a considerable extent, theory-dependent in the sense that they are generated by intuitive theories of personality which individuals have acquired. As Selby (1975) has suggested, "(the) reason trait-based explanations of problematic behavior have enjoyed such a vigorous life is that they are common sense to us. It seems that we carry about in our heads theories of personality in the form of trait intercorrelation matrices, and we use them to keep the world under cognitive control" (p. 14).

Much research has been done on responsibility attribution in everyday life. The research focus is on how individuals assign blame and culpability in relation to their own behaviors and those of others. What attribution theorists rarely make explicit is the fact that in imputing responsibility, the attributor judges an actor on the basis of both what was done and what should have been done. The former is based on direct observation of the actor's behaviors; the latter on the attributor's understanding of social norms and role expectations. Hamilton (1978) is one of the few researchers who stress the need to understand responsibility attribution in relation to internalized social norms and role expectations. According to Hamilton, formal responsibility imputation is determined by an actor's behaviors and accepted role expectations. Informal responsibility imputation may well be similarly determined. This way of conceptualizing responsibility attribution is consistent with the theory-dependent model of explanation. In this case, the socially defined role expectations constitute the "theory," on the basis of which responsibility and culpability are assigned.

A number of studies indicate that everyday explanations of behavior tend to be consistent with our naive theories of action. One such naive theory of action is the "just world hypothesis." Several writers (e.g., Lerner, 1980; Walster, 1966) have shown that individuals often attribute negative qualities to innocent victims of fate. These unfavorable attributions imply that the victims deserve what they got. According to Lerner, this is due to our belief in a just world. Because the admission that negative occurrences could take place by chance is psychologically threatening, individuals have a tendency to believe that unfavorable outcomes people experienced are deserved and are of their own making. These studies illustrate the extent to which an attributor's "theory" about a just world may influence his causal and dispositional attributions with respect to an innocent victim of fate. Once again, attributions are made on the basis of some commonly accepted theories about the nature of the social world. Conceivably, in another society or culture where the moral and religious values do not generate a belief in a just world, this type of defensive attribution probably would not have occurred.

This cursory review is meant to lend support to the contention that the theory-dependent model of explanation is inherently compatible with conventional attribution theory. We have merely made explicit what has been implicit in attribution research. The review has shown that trait-based explanations of untoward conducts, unfavorable attributions directed toward innocent victims of fate, and responsibility imputations are generated by certain commonly accepted "theories," such as intuitive theories of personality, normative and role expectations, and the just world hypothesis. Similarly, Ajzen's idea of intuitive causal theory is conceptually quite close to the theory-dependent model of explanation. It is also significant to note that Kelley, one of the initial and most important advocates of the information processing model, has paid considerably more attention to the role of beliefs in attribution behaviors in a recent study (Kelley and Michela, 1980). Kelley and his associate point out that

> (the) attributor approaches most attributional problems with beliefs about the causes and effects involved. Given a certain effect, there are **suppositions** about its causes; given a certain cause, there are **expectations** about its effects. As a consequence, explanations can often be given for events without analyzing information in the more complex ways illustrated in the preceding section. If the processing of current information does occur, it rarely proceeds without some influence from preexisting suppositions and expectations (p. 468; original emphases).

By "belief," the authors refer to suppositions about success and failure, expectations about actors and behaviors, and causal schemata. They argue that such beliefs not only have an impact on the attributions made but also affect the intake and utilization of relevant information. All this suggests that attribution theorists have at long last explicitly recognized, albeit not in a thorough and comprehensive manner, the close connection between belief system and causal inference.

Thus far, it has been argued that everyday explanations are generally derived from *a priori* theories that are an attributor's stock of knowledge at hand, his beliefs and values, and the general orientations of a society. To pursue this line of thinking one step further, we could again relate *a priori* theories to their structural and existential foundation. This brings us one step closer to the possibility of analyzing attribution behaviors from the point of view of the sociology of knowledge. This analytical approach, in short, posits that causal statements must be understood in terms of the attributor's existential basis, and that this relationship between explanation and social reality is mediated by the attributor's *a priori* theories that are in the same manner existentially anchored. This view is compatible with Hans-Joachim Lieber's argument put forth in **Wissen und Gesellschaft**:

> They (i.e., sociologists of knowledge) do not relate an isolated statement or an isolated piece of knowledge or an isolated judgment directly to social being. On the contrary, the relation between an individual proposition and its basis in social reality is indirect. All individual statements, insights and judgments in the sphere of the cultural sciences are considered as the expression of a total world-view, and only this special way of interpreting the world appears as socially conditioned in its content and structure.... The medium through which social being exerts its influence on the formation of knowledge is man.... who always lives in a determinate social world and thinks in terms of it" (quoted in Stark, 1977; p. 144).

There are two salient aspects in the complex relationships involving the existential base, *a priori* theories, and attributions. First, as a society evolves, with its social structure undergoing transformation, individuals' empirical and evaluative beliefs, which constitute potential *a priori* theories, are likely to alter. Although there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between social structure on the one hand and empirical and evaluative beliefs on the other, if structural changes are sufficiently extensive and permanent, alterations in the latter are to be expected as well. This, in turn, will induce changes in the modes of explanation. Attributions are modified as social structure and institutions in which they are anchored undergo transformation. Explanations therefore are not invariant phenomena. Gerth and Mills (1953), for instance, have noted that, as capitalism evolved from the laissez-faire to the monopolistic phase, the motive vocabularies of businessmen changed from the profit motive of individual gain to public service and efficiency. It is interesting to note a similar phenomenon in historiography. Historians at different periods interpret the same historical event differently. Hence, there are diverse accounts of the French Revolution or the Reformation. Historian E. H. Carr (1961) has given one example of such changes in historical explanation:

> Gibbon attributed the decline and fall of the Roman Empire to the triumph of barbarism and religion. The English Whig historians of the nineteenth century attribute the rise of British power and prosperity to the development of political institutions embodying the principles of constitutional liberty. Gibbon and the English ninteenth-century historians have an old-fashioned look today, because they ignore the economic causes which modern historians have moved into the forefront (p. 90).

Passmore (1962) has reminded us that, in general, changes of this kind have their origins external to history rather than within it. They arise from changing intellectual climate, rather than from dissatisfactions among historians themselves. The social scientists, not the historians, have introduced new theories to explain human behavior, which have affected the historians' interpretative schemes.

Second, a society is not necessarily a homogeneous whole. Contemporary pluralistic societies, in particular, are characterized by a high degree of differentiation and segmentation which can take place along many dimensions: ethnicity, social class, occupation, religion, age, sex, etc. The existence of social collectivities with different existential bases is likely to generate different world-views and belief systems. Schutz (1973) and Berger and Luckmann (1967) have studied this phenomenon, which they call the "social distribution of knowledge." The basic premise of these authors is that as a society reaches a certain degree of complexity, knowledge tends to be unevenly distributed within the society. Different groups are inclined to hold to distinctive enclaves of meanings and values, and see the world through lenses of different colours. It follows that, if the general proposition of this study is tenable, social collectivities that espouse different beliefs and orientations will explain social phenomena differently in accordance with their diverse interpretations of the social world. Burke (1954) makes a similar point when he suggests that in highly stable eras, the recurrent patterns of life were stabilized, and the matter of motives was relatively settled. However, in an age of great instability like ours, with political, social, economic, aesthetic, and moral orientations all in a state of flux, it is to be expected that the entire matter of motives would become fluid.

It should be noted that these two salient aspects, which will form the basis of our empirical analysis, are very much the central concern of mainstream sociology of knowledge. Commenting on the purpose of the sociology of knowledge, Mannheim (1936) has stated that it is to observe how and in what form intellectual life at a given historical moment is related to the existing social and political forces, and to distinguish diverse styles of thinking and to relate them to the groups from which they spring. In other words, the study of modes of thought in their historical contexts and the examination of the social distribution of knowledge are the primary endeavors of sociologists of knowledge.

ANALYTICAL OBJECTIVES

To recapitulate, it has been argued that there is an important relationship between the way individuals explain social phenomena and the social structure in which individuals find themselves. It has been further posited that this relationship is mediated by the individuals' empirical and evaluative beliefs and the general orientations of society, which form the *a priori* theories. An adequate understanding of attribution behavior, therefore, requires not only a study of the linkages between explanation and its theoretical basis, but also a sociology-of-knowledge analysis of the relationships between explanation, its theoretical basis, and its structural foundation.

It is to illustrate this proposition that two separate but related empirical tests will be performed. Firstly, a historical analysis will be done to trace the changing modes of explanation with respect to poverty. It will be demonstrated that the perceived causes of poverty varied from one major historical period to another. It will also be shown that changes in explanation were a function of the shifts in the general orientation of a society, and were ultimately related to the structural transformation of that society. Secondly, a more detailed analysis will be done to demonstrate the effect of the social distribution of knowledge with respect to how poverty is causally understood. It will be shown that within the same historical period, different social collectivities explain poverty in dissimilar ways. This may be due to the fact that the complexity of social structure produces different values and belief systems, thus giving rise to subuniverses of knowledge and meaning. The effects of the social distribution of knowledge may be the result of individuals occupying different statuses which, in turn, introduce them to role-specific knowledge and meaning. Or, it may be due to the existence of social collectivities with rival interests, whose rivalry is then "translated" into abstract terms.

There is one final issue that needs to be addressed. As mentioned previously, *a priori* theory is a very broad concept. It encompasses the value and belief systems of an individual, his stock of knowledge at hand, the normative and role expectations of a society, and the general orientations of a sociohistorical period. Any of these cognitive elements could potentially provide the basis upon which explanations of some sort can be made. Such a conglomerate of ideas, meanings, and knowledge elements is not conducive to empirical analysis, however. It is too all-inclusive and too nebulous. To reduce the analytical problem to a more manageable scale, we shall put emphasis on the more structured aspect of knowledge. Knowledge is structured in so far as the component elements of a knowledge system provide mutual constraints (Converse, 1964). Although there is no clear-cut boundary separating structured knowledge from discrete knowledge, it is contended that the former is less transient in nature and is more amenable to empirical measurement. The kind of structured knowledge that will be examined in this study is ideology. Following McClosky (1964), we define ideology as a system of beliefs that is elaborate and integrated, that justifies the exercise of power, interprets history, identifies right and wrong, interrelates politics and other spheres of activities, and furnishes guides for action.

Ideology can potentially constitute an *a priori* theory. Firstly, its pervasiveness in terms of its conceptual scope and its influence gives it a ring of familiarity. A major ideology is espoused by a large segment of the population. It even influences those who do not explicitly subscribe to its tenets because of its pervasive and powerful impacts on strategic institutions and on other spheres of the superstructure. Secondly, it has long been recognized that there is a relationship between the ideology an individual holds and the way explanations are made. For example, Lane (1962) has stated: "At the root of every ideology there are premises about the nature of causation, the agents of causation, the appropriate way for explaining complex event." The relationship between ideology and explanation is probably akin to that between dominant and subordinate ideas. As Walsh (1975) has pointed out, the connections between dominant and subordinate ideas, whether or not the former are acknowledged, are not causal connections in the Humean sense, but are logical in nature. Thus, explanations, particularly with respect to critical social issues, are part and parcel of a system of relatively integrated ideological beliefs.

III. THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE ENGLISH PRECURSOR

Bremner (1964b) made an insightful observation when he pointed out that

> The American poor are periodically rediscovered, each time with a sense of shock. Their plight is usually presented as a novel problem – and perhaps it is, for each generation views poverty from a changed perspective and sees it in a new light (p. 264).

The purpose of this and the next chapter is to examine how "each generation views poverty from a changed perspective." More specifically, these two chapters attempt to relate the changing interpretations of poverty to major trends of social thought and structural transformation. It is argued that the changing explanations of poverty in American society can only be meaningfully understood in relation to major shifts in values and ideology and the structural evolution of the American society.

NATURE OF THE HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

Before presenting the historical evidence, it is necessary to briefly discuss the nature of the present investigation and to describe what the analysis is and what it is not. Although the analysis presented in this and the following chapter is historical in nature, it is **not** "scientific history" in the late Victorian sense. In an effort to transform history as literature to history as science, late Victorian academic historians advocated that their tasks were to concentrate on archival records, to critically examine original sources, to discover new information about the past, and to accumulate historical facts (Heyck, 1982). The present study does none of these. It is not because these objectives are deemed undesirable. Rather, the purpose of the analysis differs from those of "scientific history."

The present analysis is based mainly on published secondary materials. There are two reasons for this. First, it is clearly not possible for a single researcher to rely totally on primary source materials when he is dealing with a topic that examines the structural transformation and ideological changes of a society over a period of several hundred years. Besides, much of the archival work has already been done by historians. Second, the intent of this historical account is to generalize on the basis of some historical findings. More specifically, it seeks to draw certain generalizations from a sequence of historical events in order to test the hypothesis concerning the relationships between social structure, ideology, and explanations of poverty. In other words, although its analytical content is historical in nature, the present analysis is not so much a historical as a sociological enterprise. The distinction between the preoccupation of most historians – the capturing of the uniqueness of historical events – and the concern of most sociologists – the ability to generalize – is superbly expressed by Berlin (1966):

> ....the business of science is to concentrate on similarities, not differences, to be general, to omit whatever is not relevant to answering the severely delimited questions that it sets itself to ask; while those historians who are concerned with a field wider than the specialized activities of men, are interested at least as much in the opposite – in that which differentiates one thing, person, situation, age, pattern of experience, individual or collective, from another. When such historians attempt to account for and explain, say, the French Revolution, the last thing that they seek to do is to concentrate only on those characteristics which the French Revolution has in common with other revolutions, to abstract only common recurrent characteristics, to formulate a law on the basis of them, or at any rate an hypothesis, from which something about the pattern of all revolutions as such (or, more modestly, all European revolutions) and therefore of this revolution in particular, could in principle be reliably inferred. This, if it were feasible, would be the task of **sociology**, which would then stand to **history** as a "pure" science to its application (p. 31; emphases added).

The historical facts to be presented in this and the next chapter are not the object of investigation. Instead, they are the material from which sociological generalizations can be made.

Such a task is not without its methodological problems. The use of published secondary sources means the reliance on preprocessed materials, and it carries the inevitable risk and possible penalty of prior selections and interpretations of earlier time frames from more contemporary perspectives. However, unless a researcher is willing to take such a risk, he can go no further than the validation and accumulation of discrete historical facts. In order to make generalizations from an orientation based on the sociology of knowledge, the present analysis synthesizes the findings of a number of historical studies. It is believed that the analysis will help elucidate the theoretical arguments of this thesis.

While the emphasis is on the American experience, a historical perspective is deemed necessary and this, in turn, would necessitate briefly examining the developments in England from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. Several major historical periods have been identified in relation to the changing interpretations of poverty. The entire analysis is presented in two chapters. Chapter III deals with the Middle Ages and the early modern period in England from the fifteenth to the mid-eighteen century. Chapter IV is devoted entirely to the American experience which is divided into four sections: the colonial era, the period from the Revolution to the Civil War, the period from the Civil War to the 1920's, and the Depression era.

The demarcation of historical periods is necessarily arbitrary, particularly when intellectual movements and ideological trends are the central concern. Social thought seldom arises and subsides instantly. It usually takes decades, if not generations or even centuries, for a school of thought to mature and become regnant. Similarly, ideas may no longer enjoy their former popularity, but they rarely vanish completely. They tend to outlive their originators and initial promoters. Another difficulty in the study of social thought is the fact that each historical epoch is likely to have cross currents of ideas. Some ideas are naturally more influential than others; however, it will be unwise to identify only one major school of thought and ignore the others. Thus, the analysis inevitably lacks precision. Nonetheless, when the analysis is on a relatively long span of time, certain major trends of social thought do emerge and the evolution of ideas is discernible.

Because there is a massive amount of material to be dealt with and because we are examining three interrelated sets of phenomena, namely, social transformation, ideological changes, and changes in the way poverty was explained, in order to present the material in a more organized an systematic manner, each of the sections representing a distinct historical period is further divided into subsections. For the sake of convenience, a brief discussion on the social structure or structural transformation is provided first. This is followed by a more elaborate analysis of the ideological scene of the period. Lastly, the typical patterns of poverty explanation are discussed. Attempts will be made throughout the analysis to demonstrate the interrelationships between social structure, ideology, and explanation. An effort will be made to point out the structural influences on ideological cahnges and the effects of ideology on the ways poverty was causally understood.

THE MIDDLE AGES

The Structural and Ideological Scene

In terms of economic development, the Middle Ages can be divided into two major periods. The first period occurred before the tenth century. The years between 900 and 1100 can be regarded as a transitional stage. Starting from the twelfth century, an economic transformation gradually took place (Gilchrist, 1969). The first period was characterized by an agrarian, subsistence economy, with land being practically the sole source of productive wealth. While trade and commerce were not nonexistent, they played a relatively minor role in the economic life of Western Europe.

Medieval society was hierarchical in structure. The basic economic institution was the manor which contained two social classes: noblemen and serfs. Medieval social structure was characterized by a system of mutual obligations and services based on this class distinction. The lord lived off the labor of the serfs who farmed his fields and paid taxes in kind and money according to the custom of the manor. In return, the lord provided protection, supervision, and the administration of justice (Hunt, 1981).

The medieval Church, one of the most important institutions in the Middle Ages, accepted the existence of private ownership of property and class inequality. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, advocated a social order based on property and class distinctions. Although Aquinas discussed at length the role of charity, he believed in the permanence of social dependency. Thus, the Church endorsed the medieval social structure as moral and just. In a sense, the Church had no choice but to support the status quo. It had become collectively the biggest land owner in Europe by the twelfth century, and could not afford to undermine its own economic position (Bolton, 1980).

While defending a system in which individual rights in property and economic inequality were explicitly acknowledged, the Church also propounded a moral viewpoint known as the Christian corporate ethics. According to this moral code, all of society was considered a single entity or corporation. Those with power and wealth were analogous to the father; the poor and the dependent the children. The rich and powerful were therefore obliged to be paternalistic toward the common people. The latter, in turn, were expected to accept their place in society and to subordinate willingly to the leadership of the wealthy and mighty. This organic and hierarchical conception of society was widely accepted. For example, Bishop Brunton, preaching in London, likened citizens and burgesses to the body's heart, adding that faithful mechanics were its left hand (Thrupp, 1977). The medieval views toward wealth and charity were an extension of this belief in the reciprocal obligations between social classes. The canonists urged that superfluous properties should be used to help the poor. It was the use to which wealth was put that determined if private property was justified, and it was as a means for dispensing charity that personal wealth was deemed morally acceptable by the Church fathers. The canonists could therefore argue on the one hand that the existing structure of property relationships was just, and on the other hand that excess wealth belonged to the poor (Bolton, 1980; Hunt, 1981; Tierney, 1959).

Medieval society was largely a subsistence economy. With its backward technology and low productivity, it generated little surplus. Most peasants led a precarious hand-to-mouth existence, and life of material scarcity was a common experience. In the events of natural disasters, wars, and major social dislocations, abject poverty and starvation were the lot for most people. This experience was given considerable religious significance in the Middle Ages. Not only was the existence of widespread deprivation accepted as inevitable, on the basis of the Biblical injunction that "the poor always ye have with you," the peasants and the poor were also idealized and romanticized by being associated with the suffering Christ. Belief in the spiritual virtue of poverty was at time widespread in the Middle Ages. Biblical admonitions regarding the poor - "If you would be perfect, go sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me" and "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" - provided further justification for viewing poverty as a blessed spiritual state. This ascetic idealization of poverty reached its zenith with the Franciscans and their belief in apostolic poverty. The Waldensians, who anticipated the Franciscans, translated and distributed New Testament passages which described the simple life of Jesus and the disciples as the model for all true Christians to follow. Formulated by St. Francis of Assisi in the early 1200's, the Franciscan Rules stipulated the idea of poor use (i.e., the use of wealth without ownership) and the vow to live as a pauper, owning nothing and using what was necessary for bare subsistence. Although Pope Gregory IX and Pope John XXII took actions to counter the Franciscan doctrines and to restrict the spread of his teachings, the Franciscan ideal of poverty was defended by many influential Christian thinkers, such as Michael of Cesena, William of Ockham, and Marsilius of Padua. This attested to the widespread influence of the mendicant orders. The words of St. Francis, *Nudus nudum Christum Sequerere* (naked follow the naked Christ), were accepted by many (Ozment, 1980).

Explanations of Poverty

Since the Church was one of the most important institutions in medieval society and since religion was the predominant, if not the exclusive, source of legitimation, it is natural that the interpretations of poverty in the Middle Ages were very much religious in nature. In general, the force of causation was considered beyond individual control. The vicissitudes of life were thought to be determined by fate or providence. Providence explained all aspects of social reality including the existence of inequality and poverty by reference to God's purpose for man (Harvey, 1979). The Church taught that the presence of poverty was a manifestation of God's mysterious but beneficent will for men. According to medieval theologians, men were appointed by God's providence for certain tasks. For the accomplishment of these missions, the divine plan called the individual to his special place in the social and economic order. Thus, some were noble and others humble; some were richer and others poorer. A Christian should accept his status with obedience and resignation, and should not seek to rise above it (Johnson, 1961). Such a providential interpretation of wealth and poverty had a long tradition. St. Basil the Great (c. 330 – c. 379), Bishop and Doctor of the Church, stated:

> Did you not come naked out of the womb, and will you not go back naked to earth again? Whence came the riches you have now? If you say from nowhere, you deny God, you ignore the Creator, you are ungrateful to the Giver. But if you acknowledge they came from God, tell us the reason for your receiving them. Is God unjust when he distributes the necessaries of life unequally? Why are you rich and another poor? Surely it is that you may win the reward of charitableness and faithful stewardship, and he the noble prizes of patience (translated by Shewring, 1948).

The existence of poverty was also justified by the spiritual benefits it brought to God's children. Poverty was regarded by many as a blessing in disguise because it provided an opportunity for others to be charitable, and because it allowed the poor, through adversity, to learn humility, patience, and gratitude. Tawney (1963) and Thrupp

(1977) have observed that in the Middle Ages, poverty had a somewhat mystical glamor, for the poor were considered God's friends, who represented the Lord in a peculiarly intimate way. It was also believed that the prayers of the poor availed much. As to why God makes some people poor, Aquinas suggested: "He (God) hears the poor when they pray: 'The Lord has hearkened to the desire of the poor' (Ps. 9: 17)." He continued, "In the second place, you must know that poverty makes a man God-fearing, by withdrawing him from evil things; and well-disciplined, by enduring him with virtuous habits: 'The poor man is glorified by his discipline and his fear' (Ecclus. 10: 33). It makes him humble in speech: 'The poor man speaks with entreaties' (Prov. 18: 23). It makes him patient in bearing adversities: 'When the poor man is wronged, he will held his peace' (Ecclus. 13: 4)" (translated by Shewring, 1948: p. 136).

Besides being considered as an outcome of providence, poverty was generally regarded as a social phenomenon produced by social and economic factors. Primitive methods of production and man's inability to control the forces of nature made economic hardship a common experience for most people in the Middle Ages. It was commonly accepted that need arose as a result of misfortune, such as sickness and accident or lack of land, for which society must assume responsibility in order to maintain justice. While believing that poverty was not a good thing, Antonino of Florence (1389-1459), Archbishop and later a canonized saint, maintained that poverty was more often the result of unjust wage rates (Jarrett, 1935). The Christian corporate ethics also required the wealthy to see to it that the impoverished were not left uncared for. "The poor man," preached Latimer, "hath title to the rich man's goods; so that the rich man ought to let the poor man have part of his riches to help and comfort him withal" (quoted in Tawney, 1963: p. 217). In short, since poverty was socially generated, the needy had a right to assistance, and the obligation to provide it fell to the more fortunate members of the community.

Most important of all, Church fathers and canonists did not usually regard poverty as a consequence of moral turpitude, or as a vice that had to be purged by punitive measures. Unlike later social thinkers who often regard the poor as morally depraved, most medieval thinkers believed that "a poor man is a honorable person." St. Ambrose maintained that "poverty is not among the number of things evil." Similarly, Joannes

Andreae stated that "poverty is not a kind of crime" (Coll, 1966; Tierney, 1959).

It was generally recognized that, among the poor, some cases were more deserving than others. For instance, Huguccio, one of the most important canonists in the twelfth century, categorized three types of poor people. Some were born poor but willingly endured their adversity for the love of God. Others joined the rank of the poor by giving up their belongings to follow Christ. But the third kind of poor people were filled with "the voracity of cupidity." As Tierney (1958, 1959) has insightfully pointed out, the difference between the teachings of the canonists and the ideas of many nineteenth-century social thinkers is that the canonists never advocated any policy that would have deterred those in real need from seeking help. They realized that some of the poor were not deserving of help, but regarded them as exceptions rather than the rule. Nineteenth-century thinkers, for the most part, assumed that such cases were normal and typical, and based their entire theory and practice of welfare on the denial of relief unless it was accompanied by harsh deterrent measures. An examination of medieval canon laws shows that while discretion was advised in the provision of assistance and rules were designed to discriminate the various categories of poor people, generally speaking, evidence of need overrode all other concerns. For example, when the resources available did not suffice for all the needy people, the more deserving cases were to be helped first. However, the canonists also agreed that when funds were adequate, strangers who were in need should be given the benefit of the doubt and should be helped without prior inquisition as to their merits. And if a man was actually near death from starvation, then he should be helped regardless of all other considerations. These teachings and admonitions suggest that the medieval Church generally did not regard poverty as a problem of sin and did not hold the poor morally accountable for their economic plight.

THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

The early modern period in England extends from the end of the medieval era – around the fifteenth century – to the mid-eighteenth century. This is a transitional period, bridging the feudal Middle Ages and the era of laissez-faire capitalism. During these several hundred years, medieval institutions and social structure were gradually replaced by new social and economic institutions that became fully mature in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Accompanying these structural developments were changes in the way people interpreted their social world. Thus, while ancient institutions and ideas lingered on, radically new structural patterns and belief systems emerged.

Structural Transformation

The changes that took place during the early modern period had their roots in the developments between the tenth and twelfth century. A fairly stable society existed in the late Middle Ages. The great majority of people were peasant farmers living in villages and firmly attached to the land. By preindustrial criterion, their standard of living was relatively prosperous (Tierney, 1959). This prosperity was brought about by improvements in agricultural technology, the most important of which was the replacement of the two-field system of crop rotation with the three-field system. This agricultural innovation greatly increased farming output and ushered in a series of events that were in part responsible for the disintegration of the medieval feudal system (Hunt, 1981). Agricultural advances and improved means of transportation led to rapid population growth and urbanization. The population of England more than tripled in less than 300 years between 1086 and 1346 (Gilchrist, 1969). Such increases stimulated the supply of and demand for agricultural and manufactured goods. Commercial activities, both internal and international, intensified during this period. Increase in urban population led to the development of rural-urban specialization in economic activities.

But the rapid population growth was arrested by the Black Death. The Black Death, a major epidemic of bubonic plague, ravaged England in 1348-1349, resulting in the loss of between one-quarter and one-third of the entire population. Two lesser epidemics hit the country within a generation, further depleting its population. By 1400, the population of England was little more than half of the pre-1348 figure. One of the most dramatic effects of the Black Death was the creation of an unprecedented shortage of labor. Workers demanded higher wages and villeins agitated to be free of their customary services in order to take advantage of the favorable labor market. The authorities attempted to cope with the scarcity and fluidity of labor by enacting repressive ordinances, such as the Statute of Laborers of 1349, which restricted the migration of workers and froze their wages (de Schweinitz, 1943; Lis and Soly, 1979).

An equally significant development during this period was the commercialization of agriculture. Many villeins were successful in having their labor services to the lords of manor commuted for money rents. This trend became particularly prevalent during the thirteenth century. Commutation often allowed the peasant to function almost as an independent small commercial farmer. Similarly, some lords of manor, in order to obtain needed cash, leased out their demesne lands to peasant farmers and thus became landlords living on rents rather than on the direct exploitation of their estates. Macfarlane (1978) has pointed out that by the thirteenth century there were already in England a well developed market and considerable labor mobility. Land was regarded as a commodity, full private ownership was established, and rational accounting and the profit motive were prevalent. According to Gilchrist (1969), toward the end of the medieval era, open field system no longer existed or were very rare, lordship was weak, and freedom widespread among the agricultural workers.

These developments had immense and lasting consequences, the most important of which was the transformation from a subsistence economy to a money economy. As Hunt (1981) has suggested, the expansion of trade and commerce was the single most important factor leading to the disintegration of medieval society. It produced a new class of bourgeoisie and undermined the feudal social structure which was based on mutual obligations between classes. Slowly, a new production relationship based on market forces arose. More and more people earned their living as independent craftsmen and commercial farmers. Wages gradually came into use. The collapse of the manorial system was accompanied by the appearance of a new labor force that owned little or no capital and had nothing to sell but its labor power. Mobility was substantially increased as workers were induced by monetary incentives to leave their villages and towns to seek a better life. Thus, men gained their freedom but lost their traditional security under the manorial system.

The demise of feudalism was hastened by a number of developments in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The most important was the enclosure movement which had begun in England as early as the thirteenth century. It reached its peak in the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, when in some areas as much as three-quarters to nine-tenths of the tenants were displaced (Hunt, 1981). The enclosure movement was just part of the process to bring greater efficiency and specialization to agriculture. Increasingly, the owners came to regard their land as a form of capital which was to be used to generate pecuniary gains. Much land, including land formerly belonging to monasteries, passed into the hands of a new breed of men who were profit- and efficiency-conscious. They readily converted their holdings from arable to grazing or reconstituted the semi-communal and wasteful open-field system still to be found in many parts of England (Jordan, 1959). Large scale enclosure and agricultural rationalization created rural unemployment and structural over-population. Many tenants were forced to join a labor market already saturated. Many small farmers lost their means of livelihood and were turned into beggars.

This process was accentuated by the mechanization of manufacturing. Much of manufacturing such as spinning and weaving had been carried on in homes throughout the country. Handicraft and agriculture supplemented each other. The introduction of power machinery made the industrial establishment, rather than the family, the basis of manufacturing, and took this work away from the rural areas. The village workers were thus deprived of a source of employment and income. This aggravated the already serious situation of rural unemployment and poverty (de Schweinitz, 1975).

The problem of structural over-population was compounded by a rapid increase in population. It was estimated by Jordan (1959) that the population of England increased by as much as 40 percent between 1500 and 1600 and by another 30 percent in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. Although population growth generated agricultural and industrial expansion, the economy was unable to absorb all the excess population. Many rural parishes and urban areas were seriously over-populated from about 1550 onwards.

These developments in the first two centuries of the early modern period further contributed to the breakdown of the feudal society. By the end of the fifteenth century, serfdom was virtually nonexistent in England. As Appleby (1978) has indicated, cooperative farming of the commons had created patterns of work, play, and ceremonial activities that reinforced the corporate life of the village. The weak, the unfortunate, the strong, and the capable were all accepted as members of the same community. Enclosure and the pressure for efficient production, however, disentangled each person from this network of community obligations and promoted instead a sense of individual responsibility. Gradually, members of the English upper social strata disassociated themselves from the cohesive ties of a corporate society. The individual's right to be free and unhindered slowly gained precedence over the traditional notion of social obligations and mutual responsibility.

The rapidly increasing volume of commerce, the growing demand for manufactured goods, the enclosure movement, and the inflation spiral during the sixteenth century enhanced the wealth and strengthened the power of the capitalist class. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, most of the major English cities had been transformed into thriving economic centers dominated by merchant-capitalists. Mercantilism as a national policy was instituted to further enhance this economic and commercial development. On the other hand, many of the rural and urban workers were impoverished. There was a growing social and economic polarization. Using tax assessment data, Lis and Soly (1979) are able to show that by the 1530's, English rural society already manifested extreme socioeconomic inequality. London in 1594 had twelve times as many beggars as in 1517, although the capital's population had risen scarcely fourfold. Another study (Jernegan, 1931) shows that in 1615, about 40 percent of Sheffield's population of 2,207 had to rely on charity.

The development of a capitalist economy continued unabated in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The stifling mercantilist policies failed to dampen private initiatives which expanded considerably during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Political crises and general affluence reduced government interference and contributed to individual economic freedom. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, real income, domestic spendings, foreign exports, agricultural outputs, capital investments, and manufacturing all registered significant increases. This unprecedented prosperity not only consolidated the position of the new bourgeoisie, but also laid a firm foundation for England to enter the era of laissez-faire capitalism.

The Ideological Scene

Against this historical backdrop, one can identify at least three major sources of influence on the belief system in the early modern period. These are mercantilism, Puritanism, and the emerging liberalism. After the passing of the Middle Ages and before the consolidation of the liberal order, there was a long period of reconceptualization. The emergence of new ideas, the displacement of old ones, and the struggle for preeminence among divergent schools of thought generally paralleled the changing social structure and the conflict of economic interests. The triumph of the new bourgeoisie in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was also reflected in the establishment of liberalism as the ultimate world-view.

In the wake of the disintegration of the medieval order, one of the most urgent tasks confronting the princes, statesmen, and the ruling elite of the fifteenth and sixteenth century was to put in place an alternative social and economic system. The problems facing the post-medieval English society were numerous: a debased currency, large scale emigration, the general confusion of industrial rules and standards, conflicts between employers and workers and between rival crafts, the threat of foreign competition, and the mounting problems of unemployment and destitution. As the Church was no longer in an all-powerful position, men looked to the state for solutions to their predicaments. Both the traditional ruling elite and the new merchant class welcomed the new role and the added power of the state. The alliance between the merchants and the monarchies helped subdue the efforts of feudal lords to retain some vestige of independent authority. The aspiring bourgeoisie saw in a strong central authority the best guarantee of its own survival and prosperity. The princes also recognized the value of this alliance because the greater the wealth the bourgeoisie could amass, the more powerful would be the state (Laski, 1936).

These social conditions gave rise to mercantilism which was a response to the collapse of traditional authority by establishing new social institutions and by upholding a set of values deemed necessary for the maintenance of a viable social system. In response to the demise of the medieval Church, the state became the most important institution that held the many elements of society together and discharged many of the responsibilities formerly performed by the ecclesiastical community. Therefore, in its initial phase, mercantilism simply transferred the ideas of social control from the Church to the state. Williams (1966) has correctly pointed out that the rise of mercantilism can be seen as an attempt to retain and adapt a Christian morality during a period of intense secularization. In this sense, it is more accurate to see mercantilism as a gradual transition from the feudal to the laissez-faire order.

But mercantilism is more than a collection of commercial and fiscal policies. It is more than a narrow ideology of the merchant class. As the great scholar of mercantilism, E. Heckscher (1962), has pointed out, mercantilism implied a general view of society and a Weltanschuung. It encompassed fairly elaborate views on society, the state, and the role of the individual. It also contained a theory of causality and how events were related to one another. However, the mercantile age, even at its height, failed to present a consistent body of social and economic ideas and policies. The era of early capitalism was in a state of flux and displayed the inevitable ideational conflicts between the old and the new.

Both as a continuation of and a departure from medieval social thought, mercantilism was characterized by its conception of society. The Biblical injunction to promote the general welfare and common good of God's corporate world and its creatures was taken seriously by mercantilists. At the same time, there was a growing tendency on the part of mercantilists to define God's estate as the civil society in which the individual Christian lived. They stressed the importance of the relationships and obligations between man and man. Mercantilism's emphasis on corporate responsibility was indicated by [illegible] series of social legislation enacted during this period. Their harshness notwithstanding, the Statute of Artificers (1563) and the various Poor Laws were based on the premise that it was the responsibility of the state to look after the general welfare of its citizens. It is in accordance with this spirit that John Cook, a barrister, said in 1648, "Governours must of necessity and in all reason provide for the preservation and sustenance of the meanest members, he that is but as the little toe of the Bodie Politique" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 56).

This corporate conception of society was reinforced by the organismic view prevalent during the early phase of this period. Society was seen as an integrated whole, with all its elements interrelated with one another. It was often likened to an organism or a piece of intricate machinery with many interdependent parts. Bishop Richard Sanderson, personal chaplain to Charles I, compared society to a clock and the human body:

> And as in the artificial body of a clock one wheel moveth another, and each part giveth and receivedth help to and from other, and as in the natural body of men, consisting of many members, all the members have not the same office, for that would make a confusion, yet there is no member in the body so mean and small, but hath its proper faculty, function, and use, whereby it becometh useful to the whole body (quoted in Breen, 1966: p. 276).

Because of this conception of society, it was deemed essential that the state consciously balance and accommodate the various elements of society in order to advance the well-being of the whole.

The organismic conception also implies that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Unlike laissez-faire advocates, mercantilists did not believe that what was good for the individual was necessarily good for the collectivity. Neither did they consider the collective good as the sum total of individual interests. A seventeenth-century pampheteer maintained that "the great profit which particular men may make, is for the most part directly opposite to the interest of the publick" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 109). In a similar manner, Samuel Fortrey warned, "Private advantages are often impediments of public profit" (quoted in Williams, 1966: p. 53). Because of this potential incongruity between private gains and public benefits, mercantilists insisted that it was the duty of the state to reconcile the conflicting interests, unavoidably in society's favor. They maintained that the welfare of society as a whole could be achieved only by means of the active and paternalistic guidance of the state.

Mercantilists had no faith in the famous hidden hand or natural harmony so well promoted by later classical economists. Instead, they believed that in order to produce certain desired results, one must manipulate prior events. Because of this preoccupation with causes behind social phenomena, mercantilists argued that it was useless to punish unavoidable results without removing their causes. Heckscher (1962) has suggested that in the eyes of mercantilists, social causation was not automatic. Instead, they believed that there were many tasks statesmen could do to influence the direction of causation. It is in this way that mercantilism could combine the view of a society shaped by powerful forces of social causation with the faith in state intervention. Thus, one of the basic tenets of mercantilism is the belief that socially desirable outcomes must be brought about through good and proper policies.

As the position of the new bourgeoisie became stronger and as capitalist institutions became more established, mercantilism and its attendant ideological perspectives were received with less and less enthusiasm. Many tenets of mercantilism were openly challenged. Increasingly, the new bourgeoisie, as well as the traditional English ruling aristocracy, turned to a new ideology, liberalism. More and more, they tended to regard state interference, the idea of corporate responsibility, and the subordination of individual interests to collective well-being as outmoded and having injurious effects on their capitalistic pursuits. On the other hand, the principles of laissez faire offered them greater opportunities and a better justification to engage in unrestraint exploitation and the accummulation of wealth. The muted hostility toward mercantilism, already noticeable before the Puritan Revolution, turned into an open ideological revolt by the eighteenth century.

Before analyzing the nature of the emerging liberal ideology, it is necessary to take a closer look at Puritanism and its role in shaping the English world-view in the early modern period. Like mercantilism, Puritanism can be seen as a belief system of a transitional period. It inherited some of the traditional religious doctrines; but it also contained many new belief elements that were conducive to the ultimate triumph of the liberal order in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The importance of Puritanism also rests on the fact that before liberalism became an established ideology, many people who reacted against feudalism and mercantilism and who harboured new visions and ambitions consciously or unconsciously used Puritanism as an ideological expression.

Puritanism's tie to the past was evident in its emphasis on providentialism, its views toward wealth particularly during the early phase of the Puritan movement, and its organismic conception of society. Providence was a traditional Christian concept, but it was Protestantism which gave providence prominence as an explanatory system in the Elizabethan and Stuart period. Predestination was an important doctrine in Calvinist theology. Puritans saw God's guiding hand in every event in life. They believed that there was a hidden meaning to social reality. Every happening could thus be explained by reference to God's overall scheme for man (Donagan, 1981; Harvey, 1979). It could also be used to justify inequality among men. For instance, William Perkins, a Puritan divine, stated: "Persons are distinguished by order, whereby God hath appointed, that in every society one person should be above or under another, not making all equall" (quoted in Foster, 1971: p. 102). This is similar to Aquinas's view that there was a divine plan in the universe which called the individual to his special place in the economy of things (Laski, 1936).

Nothwithstanding the popular belief that the Protestant ethic was congenial with the spirit of capitalism, the Puritan movement, at least in its initial phase, held an ambivalent attitude toward riches. The Puritan doctrine of the stewardship of wealth was similar to the views on wealth and private property held by the medieval Church. Wealth, claimed the medieval theologians, was not meant for man's self indulgence but was a necessary means whereby he accomplished his God-appointed missions on earth. Ownership of wealth carried with it social obligations, particularly toward the unfortunate. Early Puritans were constantly reminded of the danger of excessive wealth. Buying cheap and selling dear was sinful, warned William Ames, unless bounded within certain limits. William Perkins admonished that wealth should only be accummulated to the point of sufficiency (Dorfman, 1946).

Another aspect of Puritanism which resembled medieval Christian teaching and mercantilist ideology was its organismic view of society. William Ames, for instance, wrote:

> ....every man is bound to prefer a publike person, or the community before himselfe. For the good of the whole is more to be valued than the good of any one part (quoted in Breen, 1966: p. 276).

Other Puritans like Robert Cleaver, John Dod, and William Gouge also believed that "no man is borne for himself." But, at the same time, the Puritan emphasis on individual's one-to-one relationship with God and personal salvation through faith promoted and nourished individualism in religion. Individualism in religion, as Tawney (1963) has pointed out, led to an individualistic morality which, in turn, led to a weakening of the corporate conception of society.

While the social character of wealth was emphasized by early Puritan theologians, the doctrine of calling and the Calvinist work ethic, if pursued to their logical conclusion, tended to negate their earlier views on wealth. To receive a calling from God was to obey a divine command to live a certain kind of life and to pursue single-mindedly and methodically this livelihood. Calvinist Protestantism demanded asceticism and hard work as a fundamental Christian obligation (Foster, 1971; Rodgers, 1979). John Robinson (1970), an important Puritan leader in the seventeenth century, wrote:

> It is a blessing upon every one that feareth the Lord, and walks in his wayes, that he shall eat the labour of his hands. And, he that without his own labour eyther of body or mynd, eats the labour of other mens hands onely, and lives by their sweat, is but like unto lice, and such other vermine. Let every godly Christian, in his place, say with Christ, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work" (p. 67).

This work ethic had wide influence, particularly on mercantilist policies on employment and poverty. Mercantilists agreed with Hartlib who said, "The law of God saith, 'he that will not work, let him not eat'" (quote in Tawney, 1963: p. 220). They also agreed that while the poor and destitute should be assisted, the payment must be mediated through work, even if the work was as useless as "to bring the Stones at Stonehenge to Tower Hill" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 144). Idleness was seen as the greatest evil.

The unintended effects of combining the doctrine of calling with the work ethic were that an individual would likely get out of his place by becoming wealthy and that the medieval principle of production for consumption would be replaced by the capitalistic principle of production for profit. As early as 1616, John Downame stated that "because the Scriptures require, that we should be bountiful in good works, this should increase our care and diligence in preserving and increasing by our honest and paineful labours on our callings, and by our frugall husbanding and thriftie spending of our goods, that so having greater plentie we may be the richer in good workes" (quoted in Foster, 1971: pp. 110-111). Similarly, John Preston, Master of Emmanual College, Cambridge, wrote in 1633:

> **God** calls not a man to trust in himselfe to make riches his ayme and end, to seeke excess, superfluity and abundance.... our ayme must bee GODS glory and the publique good, and then GOD will cast riches upon us as our wages (quoted in Foster, 1971: p. 111; original emphases).

While certain Puritan doctrines were firmly rooted in the past, new beliefs and attitudes with respect to wealth, work, and individualism represented a radical departure from the medieval tradition. The fairly wide-spread acceptance of these new ideas signified a major historical turning point. The rise of the Puritan movement and the economic and social transformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were not coincidental. The relationship between the "Protestant ethic" and the "spirit of capitalism" has been discussed by many social scientists and historians, and it will take us too far afield to examine this debate in details. Suffice to point out that industrial development and commercial expansion fostered the ascent of the bourgeoisie which found in Puritanism a congenial system of values and beliefs. Puritan individualism and nonconformity, in turn, gave impetus to and were compatible with capitalistic expansion.

Those who played a vanguard role in the Puritan movement were also likely to be those who were engaged in industrial and commercial activities. The ideological and spiritual affinity between the rising enterpreneurial class and the participants of the Puritan movement has been noted by Tawney (1963) and Hill (1953, 1964, 1969). Hill has pointed out that as a social, as well as a religious, phenomenon, English Puritanism flourished in the ports and industrial areas like East Anglia and the western clothing counties and the market towns. Puritans were mostly yeomen, artisans, and small and middling merchants. In other words, Puritanism appealed especially to the smaller employers and self-employed men, both in town and in country. The emerging enterpreneurial class found in Puritanism a powerful ideological weapon to attack the vestiges of feudalism and the mercantile system. They also found in the Calvinist doctrines justifications for their pecuniary motives, their dislike for external constraints, and their desire for individual liberty. As Parrington (1927) has suggested, it is no mistake to regard the Puritan Revolution in the seventeenth century as basically a rebellion of the aspiring bourgeoisie, whose expanding commercial interests demanded a larger measure of freedom than a paternal king and a landed aristocracy were willing to grant. In addition, one of the prerequisites for large scale industrial development was the existence of a pool of free labor. Thus, the enterpreneurial class also needed a body of ideas that would emphasize the dignity of labor for its own sake and would be critical of both the extravagant rich and the idle poor. They found both in Puritanism. As Tawney (1963) puts it, to the landowners who opposed the poor rates, and the manufacturers who abhored rising labor costs, the Puritan religion offered the comforting assurance that morality would be enhanced by a reduction in both. In this way, religious and economic values fused into a powerful ideology which emphasized individual responsibility, freedom from external authority, economic pursuits, and the work ethic.

Having reached its height during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Puritanism started to wane after the Restoration. Appleby (1978) has posited that the disappearance of religious reference in the writings on trade after 1660 indicates that economic virtues could be defended on purely economic grounds. The social values associated with Calvinist Protestantism – economic rationalism, work discipline, and asceticism – survived but lost their religious significance. Frugality and industry, like interest charging and land enclosure, were recommended on the basis of their utilitarian rather than spiritual ends. Another indication of the weakening of Puritan influence was the loss of appeal of the idea of providence. Donagan (1981) has noted that while Protestants continued to acknowledge God's overall plan for mankind, by the end of the seventeenth century the use of providential explanations had become quite rare. In fact, the idea was increasingly challenged by thinkers and writers. Writing in 1646, Peter Chamberlen refused to accept the belief that the rich and the poor had been called to their respective position by divine ordinance. He asked, "Is there a necessity in nature, reason, or religion that they that are rich must be continually so, and they that are poor must be always so?" (quoted in James, 1966). It became more common to identify the unfolding of the providential plan with the operation of the laws of nature. This secularization trend was perhaps partly due to the much improved economic position of the believers. Hill (1969) has noted that the Quakers were complaining about a decline in religious zeal as members of their community prospered. A cycle that many pious Christians found disturbing was evident: godliness led to hard work which led to wealth which led to ungodliness.

A third major ideological influence, particularly in the latter part of this period, was liberalism. Liberalism did not come of age until the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but its gathering momentum was noticeable as early as the seventeenth century. Under the combined pressure of industrialization and urbanization, the old landed aristocracy either lost its traditional dominance or was forced to alter its political and social orientations and to coalesce with the rising bourgeoisie. The strengthening of the capitalist economy meant that the market gradually substituted the state as the dominant economic institution. This, in turn, affected the relationships between capital and labor and between society and the dependent classes. Such a major social restructuring inevitably precipitated substantial changes in the ideological sphere.

One can see the infusion of laissez-faire ideas and the loosening up of mercantilist thinking, particularly in the latter part of the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth century. It is during this period that writers started to pay attention to major economic forces such as demand and consumption. They began to recognize the interrelationship between consumption and production. It was believed that men's insatiable appetite to consume could induce a higher level of production and could bring forth greater prosperity. There was a related change with respect to people's perspective on wealth. Gardiner said, "There is no other use of Riches but to purchase what serves our Necessity and Delight" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 173). This linkage of wealth with personal gratification represents a major departure from the medieval emphasis on the social character of wealth. People no longer saw ownership of wealth as implying merely the privilege of stewardship; they realized the potential to use wealth freely, unhindered by any sense of mutual obligation.

Another new idea gaining wide acceptance during the last decades of the seventeenth century was the belief that economic processes were governed by impersonal and mechanical forces and conformed to the laws of nature. Charles Davenant stated in 1696: "Trade is in its Nature free, finds its own Channel, and best directeth its own Course" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 191). He also admonished against elaborate trade regulations: "Wisdom is most commonly in the Wrong, when it pretends to direct Nature" (p. 191). Economic writers of the Restoration period discovered the underlying regularity of free market activities. They contended that an economy functioning in accordance with the laws of supply and demand needed no external direction. Appleby (1978) is right in suggesting that no more powerful idea came out of the seventeenth century than that of a natural order of economic relations largely unsusceptible to social and political tinkering.

In a similar revolt against the traditional corporate and organismic conceptions of society, the seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers embraced a new theory that saw society as composed of isolated individuals, each of whom could best look after his own interest. According to this atomistic view, priority was assigned to the ultimate components out of which an aggregate was composed. Organizations and institutions, rather than being supreme, were regarded as artificial entities created for the sole purpose of serving the needs of individuals. The corollary of this atomistic view of society was the recognition that man was by nature self-seeking (Girvetz, 1950). Writing in 1695, Charles Davenant said, "The supream power can do many things, but it cannot alter the Laws of Nature, of which the most originall is, That **every man should preserve himself**" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 187; emphasis added). The well-being of society was seen as the sum total of individual interests. Therefore, any interference with an individual's attempt to pursue his interest was considered socially undesirable.

These changes in people's conceptions about the individual, the economy, society, and nature, insignificant at first, gradually turned into a torrent that swept away the ideological superstructure of the feudal and mercantile eras. A drift toward laissez faire in England was noted during the Restoration period. The tendency became a movement in the eighteenth century. Laski (1936) sums up aptly this transformation in political terms:

> In a sense, perhaps, it is true to say that Adam Smith completes an evolution that had been continuous from the Reformation. The latter substituted the prince for the church as the source of rules which regulate social behaviour. Locke and his school substituted Parliament for the prince as better fitted to pervade them with social purpose. Adam Smith went a stage further and added that, with minor exceptions, there was no need for Parliament to interfere at all (p. 180).

Explanations of Poverty

When explanations of poverty made during the early modern period are examined, one cannot help but be amazed by the wide variety of causes identified by contemporary writers. Not only did poverty attract a lot of attention and comments, the explanations offered for its existence represented a multitude of views. It is argued that this reflects the transitional nature of the period, with old ideas lingering on and new ones emerging. Thus, as social conditions evolved and as one school of thought was gradually replaced by another, one type of explanation became outmoded and another type gained currency.

One indication of this period's linkage with the past was its perception of poverty in traditional religious terms. The influence of medieval Christian teachings, particularly the belief of providence, was evident, at least before the onslaught of liberal ideas. Poverty was not understood in and of itself, but was seen as part of the overall purpose and plan which God had laid down for man. It was commonly accepted that God had ordained an unequal, hierarchical society and that wealth and poverty were natural outcomes of this providential arrangement. In this way, poverty and its relation to the whole social order were made meaningful and morally acceptable (Harvey, 1979). An example of this point of view was given by William Ames who counselled that miserable though they might be, the poor must not "murmur against the providence of God, or use unlawful means to help themselves" (quoted in Dorfman, 1946: p. 13). The traditional idea that inequality allowed the poor to learn to be humble and the rich to be charitable was also used frequently to justify the existence of poverty. For instance, James Foster, a clergyman, claimed that without poverty, "there would not be such opportunities for contentment (in the face of hardship) and a patient submission to providence, as a low and penurious condition affords," and that without the existence of the poor, the more prosperous would be deprived of the opportunity to display their "benevolent and communicative temper" in all "its proper dignity and lustre" (quoted in Viner, 1972: p. 101). Richard Sibbes also maintained that God sent outward need "so as it makes way for poverty of spirit; that as they are poor, so they have a mean esteem of themselves. It makes them inwardly more humble" (quoted in Breen, 1966: p. 281).

It was pointed out earlier that Puritans were often uneasy about wealth. Similarly, their explanations of poverty often revealed this psychological ambivalence. On the one hand, poverty was seen as part of God's providential scheme for man, a means to test their faith, and a chance for the wealthy to be charitable. On the other hand, many Puritans suspected that poverty was God's punishment for some hidden sin and an indication of the absence of grace. This ambiguity is revealed by the contradictory causes they attributed to poverty. "This poverty in it selfe and by it selfe," observed William Ames, "hath no crime in it, or fault to bee ashamed of: but is oftentimes sent from God to the godly, either as a correction, or triall and searching, or both" (quoted in Breen, 1966: p. 281). But most Puritans had much harsher views. Referring to the beggars, Perkins said, "They are (for the most part) a cursed generation.... They joyne not themselves to any setled congregation for the obtaining of Gods Kingdome, and so this promise belongs not to them" (quoted in Hill, 1952: p. 40). Thus, despite his providential view, as pointed out previously, Perkins believed that wickedness and original sin, coupled with the unwillingness to work, were the primary causes of beggary.

As religion became less and less the pivotal institution, around which human activities took place, references to sin, providence, or the spiritual significance of poverty became less frequent, and religious explanations were increasingly replaced by or fused with explanations of a secular nature. Those who refused to blame the poor for their plight tended to attribute poverty not to providence but to social factors as many mercantilists did; and those who felt that the poor were to blame tended to attribute poverty to the character and moral defects of those in need as members of the aspiring bourgeoisie were increasingly inclined to do.

The early modern period, particularly in its initial phase, is distinguishable from the periods preceding and following it by the emphasis it placed on the social genesis of poverty. This is, in large part, due to the influence of mercantilism on contemporary social thinking. As Mencher (1967) has pointed out, mercantilism inherited the medieval notion of causation being beyond individual control. However, in moving from a religious to a secular orientation, mercantilists assigned some of the responsibilities for poverty and other social evils to structural dislocations and actively intervened to remedy those conditions. The mercantilist belief in social causation convinced them that effective actions should be directed to causes and not effects. As poverty was seen as arising from economic and social malfunctioning, it was argued that repressive measures against idleness, vagrancy, and beggary were mostly futile. The major mercantilist thinkers generally affirmed the innocence of the poor. For instance, Lord Shaftsbury insisted that "poverty and necessity (were) no faults" of the individual but were the consequences of a poor system (quoted in Williams, 1966: p. 51). Influential writers such as Sir Matthew Hale, Sir William Petty, Sir Josiah Child, and Sir Francis Brewster defended the poor against accusations that they were to blame for their poverty. Instead, mercantilists and many of their contemporaries pointed to a number of social conditions that, in their opinions, were responsible for the plight of an increasing number of people. In particular, they identified enclosure, the exploitation of the poor by the rich, lack of employment, low wages, and business uncertainty as the chief culprits.

As early as 1515, Sir Thomas More, in his **Utopia**, which was by no means a typical mercantilist document, noted the disastrous consequences of the enclosure movement. He described the displaced husbandmen who were compelled to "...depart away, poor, seyle (innocent), wretched fools, men, women, husbands, wives, fatherless children, widows, woeful mothers, with their young babes.... out of their known and accustomed homes, finding no place to rest in.... And when they have wandered abroad.... what can they else do but steal.... or else go about begging. And yet then also they be cast in prison as vagabonds, because they go about and work not: whom no man will set to work, though they never so willingly profer themselves thereto" (quoted in Jernegan, 1931: p 176). This situation was given official recognition. The Act of 1533-1534 (25 Henry VIII., c13; st., iii. 451) declared that owing to the union of farms and the change from arable to pasture land, "a marvellous number of the people of this realm.... be so discouraged with misery and poverty that they fall daily to theft, robbery, and other inconvenience, or pitifully die from hunger and cold" (quoted in Ashley, 1966: p. 353).

Unlike liberals of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, mercantilists did not regard wealth that was obtained by whatever means and at whatever cost as necessarily beneficial to society as a whole. As a matter of fact, the unscrupulous exploitation by the rich was often condemned as a cause of poverty and suffering. Brinklow, a zealous Protestant of the mid-sixteenth century, accused the landlords for charging exorbitant rents "so that the pore man that laboryth and toyleth upon it, and is hys slave, is not able to lyve" (quoted in Gray, 1967: p. 7). Henry Arthington, writing in 1597, laid the blame for rural poverty principally on the wasteful landowners who rack their tenants in order to live in luxury. The enclosers, the covetous landlords, and the ruthless corn merchants, he aserted, were the "poor makers" of the age (Jordan, 1959). Cooke, an Anglican and a former member of the government of Charles I, writing in the 1640's, attributed the growth of poverty to the self interest of engrossers, alehouse keepers, and landowners. He denounced the engrossers who looked merely to their own interest and the alehouse keepers who not only engrossed the barley that should have gone to feed the poor, but, by their encouragement of drunkenness, contributed to social disorder (James, 1966). Henry Peacham, a contemporary of Cooke, believed that the existence of want and misery was due to a small number of men who "brood over and watch.... day and night" the vast estates that they had accummulated with the result that the necessities of countless number of people remained unrelieved (Jordan, 1959).

Writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century were keenly aware of the effects of the economic system on the population. England was transforming itself into an industrial and commercial society. It also became integrated into an international commercial network, over which people of one country had very little control. The adverse effects of these developments on the laboring populace was aggravated by the breakdown of traditional bonds between employers and employees, which left the working people with very little protection against the vicissitudes of free market forces. Thus, many writers of the period emphasized such factors as unemployment, under-employment, low wages, and the business cycle. In his work, **Proposals for the Imploying of the Poor, Especially in and about London** (1678), Thomas Firmin said:

> Do not imagine that all the poor people in England, are like unto those vagrants you find up and down in the streets: No, there are many thousands whose necessities are very great, and yet they do what they can by their honest labor to help themselves; and many times they would do more than they do, **but for want of employment** (quoted in de Schweinitz, 1975: p. 59; emphasis added).

Similarly, Charles Davenant pointed out in 1695 that "If the Poor were always certain of work, and Pay for it, they would be glad to quit that Nastiness which attends a begging and lazy life" (quoted in Appleby, 1978: p. 148). The poverty generating effect of low wages was stressed by John Cary, a well-known merchant and writer of economic affairs. A workhouse scheme for girls in Bristol convinced him that "the great cause of begging did proceed from the low wages for labour; for after about eight months' time our children could not get half so much as we expended in their provision" (quoted in Gray, 1967: p. 212). The effect of international market fluctuations was the concern of Thomas Mun, a director of the East India Company. He pointed out that fluctuations in the demand for cloth might "suddenly cause much poverty and dangerous uproars, specially by our poor people" (quoted in Wilson, 1969: p. 88).

One fascinating feature about the discussion on the origin of poverty in the mercantile era is the recognition by some contemporary writers and thinkers of multiple causality. This, again, may be due to the existence of divergent schools of thought that tended to have different theories on poverty and its causes. In **A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England**, John Hales, a sixteenth century writer, presented the views on the causes of poverty of four occupational groups, knight, capper, husbandman, and merchant, representing landlords, artificers, tenants, and merchants, respectively. Although all agreed that poverty was widespread in England, there was no consensus as to its causes. The husbandman blamed enclosure for high prices and unemployment. "Where XL persons had theire lyvings, nowe one man and his shepard hathe all," the husbandman lamented (quoted in Johnson, 1937: p. 23). The capper was in substantial agreement with the view of the husbandman. The knight, on the other hand, pointed out that sheep farming and rent increases were the only way for him to cope with rising prices and labor costs. Besides complaining about high prices and low income, the merchant also attributed the misery of the common people to the contraction of the market because of the "lacke of purchasing power" (Johnson, 1937). Another example of the awareness of multiple causation was Henry Arth's discussion on the causes of poverty. Writing at the end of the sixteenth century, Arth maintained that while the poor were partly to blame, poverty was mainly due to the "poore makers."

> Concerning the causes of the poore (as hath plainely explaned before) the same doth proceede partly from themselves through their idleness, etc., but more especially from the poore makers (whereof there be sundrie sorts before named), who if they would surcease their immoderate excesse (as hath beene moved by many sounde reasons) the poore would gette daily releefs thereby (Tawney, 1924: p. 457).

Marshall (1926) has noted that during the seventeenth century the great majority of the tracts dealing with the question of poverty were written in periods when the price of corn was high. This suggests that during the seventeenth century, poverty was still believed to be the result of circumstances rather than of personal degeneration. But by the eighteenth century, the change in economic outlook had become evident. Mercantilism was already on the defensive, and liberalism was rapidly gaining acceptance. This significant ideological shift induced major changes in the way poverty was causally interpreted. More and more people came to believe that the responsibility for poverty must be laid on the shoulders of the poor themselves.

Although individualistic explanations were most common in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, they were not nonexistent in earlier periods. For example, in **The Declaration of the humble Suit made to the King's Majesty's most honourable Council, by the Citizens of London, A.D. 1552**, it was stated that "after due examination had, we evidently perceived that the cause of all this misery and beggary was idleness: and the mean and remedy to cure the same must be by its contrary, which is labour" (Tawney, 1924: p. 307). Toward the end of the seventeenth century, such views became commonplace. Macpherson (1962) has observed that moral delinquency of both the idle poor and the laboring poor was a constant theme of post-Restoration economic writing. Commenting in 1686 on the increase of poor rates, R. Dunning concluded that it was "Not occasioned by any Dearth or Scarcity of Necessitie there being never a greater plenty; nor for want of employment, there being never more, nor through smallness of wages, that being never so great. But by Idleness, profuse Expenses, the ill-bringing up of children and the younger sort" (quoted in Marshall, 1926: p. 31). About ten years later, in his **Report to the Board of Trade**, John Locke analyzed the causes of poverty:

> If the causes of the evil be looked into, we humbly conceive it will be found to have proceeded neither from a scarcity of provision, nor from a want of employment for the Poor, since the goodness of God has blessed these times with plenty, no less than the former, and a long peace during two reigns gave as Plentiful Trade as ever. The growth of the Poor must, therefore, have some other cause, and it can be nothing else but a relaxation of disciplines and a corruption of manners (quoted in Marshall, 1926: p. 31).

The first half of the eighteenth century is the final phase of the early modern period. In terms of ideology, the first half of the eighteenth century was at the threshold of the era of liberalism. Although remnants of Puritanism and mercantilist ideas could still be found; the influence of liberalism became evident. In so far as explanations of poverty are concerned, the majority of the explanations were individualistic in nature. A couple of examples will suffice to illustrate this point. Writing in 1704, Daniel Defoe stated: "Tis the men that won't work, not the men that can get no work, which makes the members of our poor" (quoted in de Schweinitz, 1975: p. 59). Another eighteenth century writer stated:

> Though complaints of **poverty** and **scarcity** of money are unhappily become no less **general** than lamentable; so that wherever we go, our ears are assaulted with the sad **rhetoric** of beggary; and our eye with deplorable objects of pity: yet must it be acknowledged, that we rail **impertinently** at the hardness of times, since 'tis ourselves that make them **such**; men generally by **sloth** or **vanity**, **negligence** or **extravagence** twisting those **chains** of necessity wherein they lie **entangled**; wherefore.... let everyone wipe his **eyes**, and make use of his **head**, and his **hands** to preserve or recover himself out of the quagmire of want. It being certain that **still** every man in health and strength may forge himself out a **fortune** by **industry** and **frugality**, and obtain (though not a splendid yet) a comfortable subsistence (quoted in Gray, 1967: p. 208; original emphases).

SUMMARY

The transition from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century is a change from a world in which the genesis of events was given a religious interpretation to a world in which the etiology of events was mostly understood in individualistic terms. This applies to the explanation of poverty as well. In the Middle Ages, economic well-being was largely seen as the outcome of events providentially determined. At the end of the early modern period in England, wealth and poverty were mainly considered the outcomes of actions individually controlled. It has been the argument of this chapter that this change in the way poverty was causally understood is not accidental, but is a reflection of an ideological evolution from a world-view dominated by the teachings of the medieval Church to an emergent liberal world-view of the early eighteenth century. In addition, it has been argued that the ideological change was a function of the structural transformation of the English society from feudalism to early capitalism. Between feudalism and capitalism, there was a lengthy transitional period, during which the socioeconomic structure underwent a gradual metamorphosis. The transitional period was characterized by the struggle for preeminence of a number of major ideological forces and the existence of many theories and perspectives on the nature and causes of poverty.

IV. THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The transition from the early modern period in England to the colonial era in America is a logical one. The American colonies were founded and populated largely by English settlers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. As well, the colonists transplanted English values, institutions, and ways of life to the new continent. Thus, there was no sharp break between the early modern period which was the focus of the last chapter and the colonial period which forms the first section of the present chapter. Three other periods will be examined in order to complete our survey of the American experience. These are the period from Independence to the Civil War, the period from the Civil War to the 1920's, and the period of the Great Depression.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The English experience in the early modern period and the American colonial experience can be seen as parallel developments, although the latter largely modelled itself on the former. Since an elaborate discussion on structural and ideological transformations as well as changes in people's causal understanding of poverty during the early modern period was given in the last chapter, there is no need to repeat the analysis on the colonial era in great detail. It is sufficient to show that similar forces were at work on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. However, since the American experience was unique in certain respects due to the unusual environment in which it took place, some of the special developments in colonial America are to be highlighted.

Structural Arrangements

As English colonies, American settlements adopted from England religious perspectives, economic policies, political institutions, and social values. While America was strongly identified with the mother country, the colonies differed from England in some major respects. This helped define the unique nature of American development.

Most important of all, America did not experience first hand a feudal paternalism and did not have a class of serfs bound to the land and a titled, hereditary aristocracy (Mencher, 1967; Nettels, 1963). The absence of a feudal past had a significant effect on the American psyche and the American ideological perspective. This aspect will be explored in greater detail later. Structurally speaking, it contributed to the creation of an American colonial society that was characterized by an unusual degree of equality, fairly high level of social mobility, and the dominance of a self-employed middling status group. The large measure of equality and social mobility stemmed in part from the easy availability of land. In most parts of colonial America land was relatively cheap. Even servants could readily become small landowners. The class of landless poor was relatively small. On the other hand, since the land produced little surplus, there were few men of great wealth and few pioneers who owned large estates. Thus, although it was difficult for ordinary individuals to make it to the top, few were permanently placed at the bottom level. It was estimated that less than 5 percent of the white population were in permanent poverty.

In the cities, the relative ease with which skilled workers could obtain credit and the relatively high wages enabled many workers to accumulate enough money to become independent artisans or small property owners. It was estimated that small farmers, traders, and craftsmen accounted for about 70 percent of the entire white population (Main, 1965; Nettels, 1963). It appears that the American scene was a marked contrast to European societies where the presence of a large dependent class was made permanent by a rigid class structure.

More akin to the European situation was the South which was characterized by great class differentiations. The poor whites and slaves made up a sizeable under-class. At the top was the landed aristocracy which, according to Main (1965), was virtually a closed group by the time of the Revolution. But this situation was more prevalent in Virginia than in the less developed regions of the South. Greater equality was evident in frontier areas where there were few slaves and men of great wealth. Thus, colonial America was largely a society of small merchants, self-employed artisans, and independent commodity producers. Using historical occupational statistics, Reich (1978) is able to show that in the United States of 1776, about 80 percent of the nonslave working people derived their income from their own property or labor.

The social condition in colonial America was generally conducive to the development of economic individualism. Since most of the nonslave workers owned the means of production and controlled the productive process, they saw themselves as self-made men and masters of their own fate. Furthermore, the absence of a feudal past means that their actions were not constrained by traditionalism and their ambitions not checked by a class of noblemen and aristocrats. As a matter of fact, the desire to rebel against a stifling tradition and a hostile authority, both secular and religious, was the prime motive of many of the emigrants from England. They were Puritans, congregationists, and Quakers, many of whom were engaged in farming, trade, and industry. In other words, they were likely to be members of the middling status group who tended to value economic freedom, personal responsibility, and entrepreneurship. In terms of religious beliefs, they were inclined to emphasize personal religious experience and the believer's unmediated relationship with God. Such religious convictions led to nonconformism and strengthened their desire for liberty, individual rights, and their distaste for civil and spiritual authorities.

Reinforcing this spirit was the frontier conditions of the colonies. Although widespread destitution as it was known in Europe was relatively rare, life was generally harsh and the physical environment hostile. There was little surplus to support economically nonproductive persons. In addition, since most early settlements were small, isolated communities, with a meagre resource base and very limited interdependence, economic self-sufficiency at the local level was critical. The ability to fend for oneself was not just a moral virtue; it was a necessary condition for survival. The background of the colonists, the economic conditions, and the dictate of the frontier environment all tended to foster a spirit of individualism and independence.

The Ideological Scene

Generally speaking, it would be a mistake to assume that colonial America was a land of laissez-faire liberalism and rugged individualism. As one author (Crowley, 1974) has remarked, there was as yet no intellectual framework in which the unfettered pursuit of self interest could claim legitimacy. The colonial period, like the English early modern period, was a transitional era, with many belief systems and schools of thought coexisting or competing for dominance. While individualism was encouraged by certain conditions that existed in colonial American society, other factors were also at work promoting alternative ideological orientations, the most significant of which was mercantilism. The colonies were progenies of English mercantile expansion. It is, therefore, not surprising to find mercantilism flourishing on the new continent. The influence of mercantilist policies could be felt until the early nineteenth century.

Without repeating the major features of mercantilism, we shall briefly note its ideological impact. While most colonists recognized self-interest as the main economic driving force, they continued to place high value on collective well-being. They were keenly aware of the potential social destructiveness of unbridled private acquisitiveness. As one colonist stated, if economic individualism went unchecked, "the weakest always go by the walls, and become a prey to the strong; the Rich, Great, and Potent, with rapacious violence bear down all before them, who have not wealth, or strength to encounter or avoid the fury" (quoted in Crowley, 1974: p. 103). Instead, the colonists upheld the ideal of mutual dependence and obligations among social classes. John Winthrop, first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, admonished that "the rich and mighty should not eate upp the poore," and neither should the poor rise up against their superiors or to shake off their yoke (Wisner, 1945). Noting that the public good was greater than the sum of individual interests, the colonists urged the subordination of self aggrandizement to broader social concerns and emphasized the importance of the traditional ideal of corporate responsibility and welfare.

It was believed that in order to safeguard collective welfare and to extend help to those in need, economic activities must be regulated by the state. Government was considered a positive force which could and should protect and promote the well-being of society. Preaching in Boston in 1667, Jonathan Mitchell charged the colonial legislators with the duty of assisting the "outward Estate and Livlyhood" of the people "by such help as the care of Government may contribute to that end" (quoted in Johnson, 1961: p. 16). The belief that government had no place in the economic life of its citizens had not yet become fashionable.

The ideal of corporate responsibility and mutual obligation among the classes was encouraged not only by mercantilism and traditional Christian teachings, but also by the conditions in the South, particularly in Virginia where the social conditions created a favorable climate for the maintenance of this ideal. Class distinctions were greater in Virginia than in other colonial regions. Similarly, more than any other colonies, Virginia resembled feudal England, with the rich planters representing the manorial lords, and the large population of slaves and indentured servants representing the villeins. Considering themselves as transplanted English gentry, the Virginia colonists adopted the values and behaviors of the English country squires, including the paternalism of the manorial lord to his villeins and the traditional views toward wealth and charity (Bernhard, 1977).

Another major source of influence on the ideological perspective of colonial America was Calvinist Protestantism. As pointed out earlier, many emigrants to the American continent were Puritans and other Calvinist Protestants such as Scottish Presbyterians, French Huguenots, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church. As a result, the ideas of Calvin and his immediate successors left an indelible imprint on American thought. As it has been shown previously, Puritan thinking, especially in the early phase of the Puritan movement, was not one-sidedly wealth oriented. Johnson (1961) has noted that American Puritan writings exhibited no more idealization of wealth accumulation than Catholic economic literature. Although the believers recognized the necessity of wealth, they did not idolize riches. The traditional idea of stewardship was very much a part of the Puritan theory of wealth. The purpose of wealth, Cotton Mather wrote in **Durable Riches**, was twofold: to provide for one's family and to use wealth for pious purposes. At the same time, Puritans sanctified productive labor and private property; they also approved of commerce and profit-making. All this indicates that the Calvinist outlook was a mixture of old and new. Nettels (1963) has suggested that in their economic views, the Puritans stood midway between medieval and modern times.

But the trend of American development weakened the traditional aspects of Calvinist Protestantism and enhanced its innate capitalistic tendencies. With less and less ethical qualms, Calvinist Protestants exalted the work ethic, private property, pecuniary accumulation, and economic inequality. Samuel Willard aptly captured this changing perspective when he wrote in **Compleat Body of Divinity** in 1726:

> It is not sufficient to take heed that nothing be wasted, but we must husband our Estates to **Advantage**: It is not enough to **get** an Estate, but there is a Duty to endeavour that it may prosper by good husbandry of it, in the best way. **Prosperity** is a **Blessing** to be desired, (tho' not insatiably to be grasped after, which is a Temptation to Sin.)... **Riches** are consistent with **Godliness**, and the more a Man hath the more Advantage he hath to do Good with it, if God give him a Heart to it (quoted in Foster, 1971: p. 111; original emphases).

The American colonial era, like the period between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century in England, was transitional in nature with respect to the development of economic institutions and social thought. While many of the prevailing ideas in the colonies were inherited from the mother country, the unique conditions in America gave special saliency to some of these views. In general, the ideological scene contained the lingering influence of traditionalism and a foretaste of what was yet to come. The beliefs and values, while not entirely consistent with one another, were often held in a delicate balance. As Nettels (1963) has suggested, the colonial outlook may be described as an expression of a middle-class psychology which emphasized industry and thrift and took economic inequality for granted. It revealed both a utilitarianism overlaid with religious tradition and an individualism tempered with a corporate conception of society.

Explanations of Poverty

As in the case of the early modern period in England, the existence of a multitude of perspectives and the diversity of social conditions in the various colonies elicited different views on the causes of poverty. Ideas from England were transplanted to the colonies. The traditional corporate conception of society, mercantilism, Puritanism, and the emerging liberalism all played an important role in shaping the colonists' attitudes toward poverty.

Because of geographical and historical diversity among the colonies, the English influences were differentially received. For example, while the influence of Calvinist theology was most evident in the New England colonies, Virginia upheld traditionalism. As mentioned before, the Virginian planters saw themselves as transplanted English country gentry and sought to emulate the paternalism of the manorial lords. While Puritans were uncomfortable when confronted by poverty, Virginians took the existence of destitution for granted. Poverty was accepted as part of the natural order of society, and most Virginians felt an obligation to relieve it. Charity was a matter of *noblesse oblige* and the planters dispensed charity more as a part of a gentleman's duty than as a means to attain spiritual grace. The existence of poverty in Virginia, in contrast to that in New England, was neither a cause for alarm nor a reason for self-criticism (Bernhard, 1977).

Under the influence of Puritanism, New Englanders were troubled by the ambiguities of poverty and riches. On the one hand, poverty was seen as part of God's providential plan; on the other hand, poverty was suspected to be a sign of God's punishment for some hidden sin. This psychological ambivalence was reflected in some of the views expressed. For instance, John Winthrop said:

> God Almight in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all time some must be rich, some poore, some high and eminent in power and dignitie; others mean and in submission (quoted in Johnson, 1961: p. 229).

Similarly, Cotton Mather pointed out that men were rich or poor according to God's election and that God "is the maker both of the rich and the Poor" (quoted in Johnson, 1961: p. 230). However, another clergyman, Samuel Danforth, asserted:

> The reason why some Families Flourish not in their Persons, Estates, or Interests, is not chiefly because their Neighours do not love them, but because Sin.... makes them wither and decay (quoted in Bernhard, 1977: p. 152).

Another Puritan pointed out that it was possible that "persons may sometimes come to **pinching poverty**; yet not for any particular, remarkable Sin or fault of their own" (quoted in Crowley, 1974: p 63; original emphasis).

The view that the poor were not to blame for their own poverty was reinforced by the mercantilist theory of social causation. It was generally believed that poverty was a matter beyond the control of the individual. John Woolman thought that the mere existence of poverty was sufficient evidence to prove that someone was getting and keeping more than he deserved. "Were all superfluities and the desire of outward greatness laid aside, and the right use of things universally attended to, Such a number of people might be employed in things usefull, as that moderate labour, with the Blessing of Heaven, would answer all good purposes" (quoted in Crowley, 1974). Another indication of the influence of mercantilism on the colonists' attitudes toward poverty was the adoption by the colonies of the major principles of England's poor relief system. Among these were the responsibility of the state for the relief of the poor and the right to compel those with property to help support the dependent classes through a system of general taxation (Jernegan, 1931). At the first session of its colonial legislature, Rhode Island announced the Elizabethan Poor Law principles that stressed public responsibility for the poor (Axinn and Levin, 1975). These policies reflected mercantilism's belief in an activist state and its organismic conception of society.

However, under the growing influence of the new liberal ideology and individualism nurtured by the unique conditions in America, the colonists increasingly saw poverty as a consequence of individual inadequacies. Similarly, the Protestant religion gradually shifted its emphasis from a social to an individualistic orientation. For instance, by the time of the American Revolution, American Quakers had by and large relinquished their earlier structural perspective and had come to accept the ethos of individualism. As a result, more and more Quakers came to equate the poor with the indolent (Feagin, 1975). The view that the poor were responsible for their plight became more popular during the eighteenth century. Joseph Belcher complained in a Massachusetts election sermon in 1703 that idleness and drunkenness were "the Parent of a great deal of the Poverty and Beggary, which is to be seen upon many" (quoted in Foster, 1971: p. 151). Another person pointed out:

> **Sloth** and **Idleness**, **Lust** and **whoredom** are such Sins as in their nature, bring the Subjects of them to **Poverty**, and their Bodies and Names under **disagreeable Circumstances** (quoted in Crowley, 1974: p. 64; original emphases).

As can be expected, the tendency to explain poverty in individualistic terms was accompanied by an increasingly critical attitude toward the public relief system. For example, the influential Benjamin Franklin openly advocated the abolition of the Poor Laws. He argued that since the poor were the cause of their own misfortune, the assumption of social responsibility would worsen the problem by encouraging further dependency. He wrote in 1753:

> I have sometimes doubted whether the laws peculiar to England, which compel the rich to maintain the poor, have not given the latter a dependence, that very much lessens the care of providing against the wants of old age.
>
> I have heard it remarked that the poor in **Protestant** countries, on the continent of Europe, are generally more industrious than those of **Popish** countries. May not the more numerous foundations in the latter for relief of the poor have some effect towards rendering them less provident? To relief the misfortunes of our fellow creatures is concurring with the Deity; it is godlike; but, if we provide encouragement for laziness, and supports for folly, may we not be fighting against the order of God and Nature, which perhaps has appointed want and misery as the proper punishments for, and cautions against, as well as necessary consequences of, idleness and extravagance? (quoted in Axinn and Levin, 1975: pp, 19-20; original emphases)

Such attitudes toward the poor became the norm after the American Revolution.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE CIVIL WAR

In the preceding section, some of the socioeconomic conditions in the colonial era which subsequently led to the establishment of a laissez-faire society during the period beween Independence and the Civil War have been discussed. The absence in colonial America of a well-established system of status relationships encouraged the adherence to the principle of contract. The geographic isolation of communities and dispersion of resources enhanced the spirit of self-reliance and independence. The large proportion of independent commodity producers, self-employed artisans, and small traders among the population fostered the growth of economic individualism and freedom. These socioeconomic conditions laid a firm foundation for the emergence of a free-enterprise economy and a liberal society in the nineteenth century.

Structural Transformation

Although it is symbolically significant that Adam Smith's **Wealth of Nations** was published in the very year America shook off her colonial shackles, the gaining of independence did not immediately usher America into a laissez-faire society. For at least a generation after the Revolution, mercantilism still exerted a powerful influence on American social and economic policies. Even the determined leaders of the Independence Movement saw America as a mercantilist empire. The commitment to mercantilist policies by most of the delegates to the constitutional convention was another indication of the pervasive influence of this economic doctrine (Williams, 1966). Alexander Hamilton, who dominated American economic policy in the early years of the republic, was a mercantilist whose dream was to transform rural America into an industrial power with the help of the national government. Although the mercantilists were opposed by the Jeffersonians who advocated a static, agrarian economy with an essentially passive government, the need to nurture the young republic and the necessity of development made mercantilism acceptable. The government used mercantilism to justify policies that were aimed at strengthening the internal and external position of the new nation. As well, public initiatives and support were seen as essential to induce capital formation and industrial growth. Thus, the economic philosophy of the business community and the governing elite tended to be interventionist in nature (Mencher, 1967; Schlesinger, 1963). American mercantilism represented one of the last ideological floodgates holding back the powerful torrent of laissez-faire liberalism.

During this period the intellectual critique of classical economics was provided by the national school of political economy. Its prominent members included Matthew and Henry Carey, Daniel Raymond, John Rae, Stephen Colwell, and Willard Phillips. Daniel Raymond, for instance, believed that government must regulate private property in the public interest and help those who needed assistance. Henry Carey, the most important of the national economists, was highly critical of the economics of Ricardo and Malthus. But taken as a whole, the national school of political economy presented no formidable ideological opposition to classical economics. The most important anti-laissez-faire proposition it advocated was the imposition of protective tariff (Fine, 1969).

In a sense, American mercantilism in the post-Independence period created the conditions for its own demise. Industrial strength and prosperity, which were achieved with the help of mercantilist measures, eventually underminded mercantilism as an economic policy and a social philosophy. The era after the War of Independence was a period of expansion. America was galloping forward with vitality, zeal, and optimism. The country was expanding rapidly in many directions: its population doubled and redoubled; its territory kept extending to the south and the west; its economy was growing at a phenomenal rate. In the 70-year period between 1790, the year of the first American census, and 1860, the American population increased eight-fold from 3,929,000 to 31,513,000. At the turn of the century, only about 6 percent of the population were urban. In 1860, about one in five of all Americans lived in cities. Population increase was accompanied by geographic expansion through a series of territorial acquisitions and purchases from Great Britain, France, Spain, and Mexico. By 1860, the country's land area stretched to as far as the Pacific coast, and its northern and southern borders were fixed. The thirteen original states had grown to thirty-three.

By the 1820's, the stifling effects of British colonial policies had largely worn off and the impact of the Industrial Revolution was beginning to be felt. American society was rapidly transforming itself from an agricultural to an industrial economy. Population increase, urbanization, and industrialization went hand-in-hand. Industrialization made possible the accumulation of massive wealth and the growth of the middle class, both in size and in power. The extension of the frontiers gave the nation an enormous agricultural base and an almost infinite supply of untapped natural resources.

The age of Jackson was the watershed. During the Jackson era, the United States was at the economic take-off point. Self-generating economic activities played an increasingly important role and the private sector had replaced the state as the major supplier of capital. After the early decades of the nineteenth century, the government tended to intervene less in the economic sphere. Private rather than public enterprises had come to dominate banking and transportation (Fine, 1969). After the take-off, the essential need was no longer the provision of social overhead capital; it was rather the maximization of production and innovation. In this new economic context, the relationship between government and business began to undergo a significant change. Almost without realizing it, the business community was moving away from the Hamiltonian conception of a mercantilist state. Businessmen no longer saw an economic need for state regulation and intervention. Instead, they espoused the Jeffersonian proposition of a noninterventionist government and the free interplay of individuals (Schlesinger, 1963). Out of this rebellion against mercantilism, a laissez-faire society was born.

Ideological Changes

With the gradual eclipse of mercantilist thinking, classical economics and liberal ideology became regnant. Williams (1966) has compared the ideological shift during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to the rise and fall of John Locke's popularity. It is as if the works of Locke, briefly used in 1775 and 1776 to legitimized the revolutionary movement and then shelved in favor of mercantilism, were being taken down again as a justification for maximizing the economic opportunities that mercantile policies had helped bring about.

Classical economics, first proclaimed by the French physiocrats and more fully developed by Adam Smith and his followers, was not long in finding a receptive audience in the newly independent nation. American economists such as Francis Wayland, Thomas Cooper, John McVickar, Henry Vethake, Samuel Phillips Newman, George Frederick Holmes, J. Newton Cardozo, Francis Bowen, George Tucker, and John Bascom were supporters and promoters of classical economics and laissez-faire policies.

Classical economists believed self-interest to be the chief motivating force in economic activities. Self-interest, according to classical economists, would lead to socially desirable results because in pursuing their private gains, individuals would unconsciously serve the public good. Because of men's desire to avoid pain and to seek pleasure, they would avoid exertion and work unless compensated by the prospect of a corresponding greater amount of pleasure. Conversely, men must not have access to the fruits of toil without toiling. Men must be secure in the possession of the rewards of their labor. By a series of deductions, this came to mean that the property right in all its forms were inviolable. Ownership of property was not seen by classical economists as indicating merely the privilege of stewardship. It signified the free use of wealth unencumbered by any sense of corporate obligations (Girvetz, 1950; Mencher, 1967). Another logical consequence of this egoistic premise was that priority was given to the individual rather than to the collectivity. According to this point of view, society was made up of isolated individuals, each of whom could best determine his own interests. Thus, individual and social well-being would best be achieved not by external control or regulation, but through individual striving and free competition. Individual economic activities were seen as guided and regulated not by divine purpose, as was commonly believed in the Middle Ages, or by civil-political authorities, as was the case when mercantilism was in vogue, but by an apersonal and mechanistic market system (Wisman, 1979). It was therefore believed that state interference should be reduced as much as possible. Tom Paine, a major spokesman of the Jeffersonian Democrats, proclaimed:

> The more perfect civilization is, the less occasion has it for government, because the more does it regulate its own affairs, and govern itself.... All the great laws of society are laws of nature (quoted in Mencher, 1967: p. 140).

Laissez-faire liberalism received its support not just from economists and politicians. The Protestant religion provided considerable legitimation for the existing socioeconomic order. Evangelical Christianity, with its emphasis on individual salvation and its conception of the individual as a free moral agent, served to strengthen individualism. The established Church of various Protestant denominations also sided with the rich and powerful elements of society. Many prominent Church leaders were ardent promoters of the cult of self help and success. This can be seen from the titles they gave to their sermons and books. Congregational clergyman, John Todd, lectured on **The Foundations of Success** in 1843. Another Congregational clergyman, Matthew H. Smith, made his famous address, **The Elements of Success**, in 1854. Henry Ward Beecher of the Brooklyn Plymouth Church established himself as an expert on the art of self-help through **Seven Lectures to Young Men** (1844). William van Doren of the Dutch Reformed Church at Piermont, New York authored **Mercantile Morals** in 1852. Reverend Thomas P. Hunt called his 1836 publication **The Book of Wealth: in which It is Proved from the Bible that It Is the Duty of Every Man to Become Rich**. They were joined by other clergymen, such as Francis E. Clark, Wilbur F. Crafts, Lyman Abbott, Russell Conwell, and Daniel Wise (Wyllie, 1954).

The Enlightenment, Christian perfectionism, and transcendentalism also played an important role in promoting the faith in the individual. The Enlightenment of the eighteen century injected boundless optimism by preaching a doctrine of infinite progress and rationality. Man, it was argued, was not depraved but was a reasonable being, capable of improving the condition of society for himself and his less fortunate fellow citizens. The Enlightenment doctrine of progress was later transformed by a romantic religious faith into a dynamic principle of reform. The central tenet of Christian perfectionism was the rejection of determinism. It was believed that man was not helpless but had the potential for good. Salvation was attainable by all. But this perfectionist Christianity was individualistic in nature. As Thomas (1965) has pointed out, it emphasized the unfettered will as the proper vehicle for reform. Since it defined social evil as the sum of individual sins, it followed that societal imperfection would disappear when enough people had been converted and rededicated to right conduct. True reform, therefore, meant a program of mass conversion achieved through educational rather than political means.

Transcendentalism played a similar role in promoting the faith in the individual. It was, indeed, in the writings of the transcendentalists Emerson and Thoreau that the doctrine of the free individual attained its classic expression in mid-nineteenth century America. Emerson (1957) wrote in his journal in 1840: "In all my lecture, I have taught one doctrine, namely the infinitude of the private man" (p. 139). In insisting on the individual as the ultimate reality in society, Emerson was a characteristic spokesman for his time. Like Emerson, Thoreau was contemptuous of the state. In his famous essay, **Civil**

Disobedience, he carried individualism to a point where it became almost indistinguishable from anarchism. Transcendentalists turned inward to examine the divine self and find in there the material with which to rebuild society. American transcendentalists were reformers but they did not possess a theory of social change. Transcendentalism was part of the dominant philosophy of individualism. It substituted selfish materialism and competition with an introspective individualism. Merging perfectionist Christianity and transcendental method, Theodore Parker emphasized that it was a shared sense of the divinity of individual man that held society together. (Fine, 1969; Mencher, 1967; Thomas, 1965).

The westward and southward expansion of the young Republic was briefly described earlier. The enormous territorial acquisition in such a short period of time had a tremendous socioeconomic, as well as psychological, impact on the young nation. The frontier captivated the imagination of many Americans for several generations. It was a challenge to the adventurous and was believed by many to be the economic panacea for the desperate. Americans long took comfort in the belief that the boundless opportunities offered by a rich and sparsely populated continent afforded a sure cure for the economic ills of the impoverished classes.

Numerous Americans and newly arrived immigrants did leave the Eastern seaboard for the frontier regions. And the frontier did leave an indelible mark in the American psyche. As the great frontier historian, Frederick J. Turner (1893), has observed, "American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, the fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character" (p. 200). For those who migrated to and settled in the undeveloped regions, the frontier helped shape their character. As Turner pointed out, the frontier "is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is antisocial. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control" (p. 221). Turner described this individualism as strong in selfishness, intolerant of administrative experience and education, and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper bound.

Explanations of Poverty

A vigorous laissez-faire liberalism, coupled with an individualistic, wealth-oriented Protestantism and a frontier mentality, naturally evoked an attitude toward poverty that tended to blame the poor for their suffering and to see society and social institutions as largely benign. The poor not only were held responsible, they deserved to suffer because of their laziness, ineptitude, or immorality. However, not all writers in this period blamed the poor. A few delved into economic factors, sometimes with considerable insight. The mercantilist influence and the corporate conception of society were still evident in some of the analyses of the problem of poverty in the ante-bellum period. Matthew Carey, a Philadelphia pamphleteer and a prominent national school political economist, was a leading opponent to the individualistic interpretation of poverty. He refuted certain popular views about the poor, such as the belief that their distress was a result of their own fault. Carey maintained that rather than locating the cause for the rise in poor rates in the poor themselves, one must look to the workings of a market economy and the effects of increasing mechanization. "A cause has been steadily and powerfully operating to increase the poor rates.... I mean the rapid and oppressive reduction of wages, consequent on the wonderful improvements in machinery. Manual labour succumbs in the conflict with steam and water power: and everything that supersedes the demand for that labour must increase competition; lower wages; produce distress; and.... increase the poor rates" (quoted in Axinn and Levin, 1975: p. 41). Similarly, Daniel Raymond, another national economists, traced pauperism to the unequal distribution of property, which led to an unequal division of the products of labor.

Both Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, a Unitarian "minister to the poor," and Dr. John H. Griscom, a health officer of New York City, recognized the economic and structural causes of poverty and championed for social reform (Trattner, 1979). Henry W. Bellows, an influential Unitarian minister, also differed from most of his contemporaries in his analysis of the etiology of economic dependency. His earlier views toward the poor were quite conventional. However, as a result of his survey of charitable institutions in New York in 1855, he gradually revised his views. He eventually concluded that poverty was not a moral problem that could be overcome simply by hard work. The only effective way to cure the problem of poverty, Bellow maintained, was through "equal laws, social rights, popular education, and protective legislation" (quoted in Clark, 1970: p. 66). His new outlook on poverty was based on a firm belief in institutions. He repudiated the laissez-faire conception of man as a self-interested, self-contained being. This, he charged, was an "irrational theory of individuality, which disintegrates the race into its component parts and makes each atom of humanity complete in itself...." (quoted in Clark, 1970: p. 66).

But as Klebaner (1980) has noted, if it is refreshing to hear these views and to find a committee of the New York legislature pointing to the unusual economic paralysis and the subsequent large scale unemployment as the chief causes of the great increase in pauperism in the late 1830's, it is because such views were so rare in comparison with the endless speeches, sermons, academic treatises, and government reports, which held the poor responsible for their suffering. One writer wrote as early as 1787 that "The superior industry, frugality and ability of some will ever procure wealth and respect, while the idleness and dissipation of others must beget contempt and indigence" (quoted in Main, 1965: pp. 31-32). Such views were not uncommon in the early years during this period, but they b[illegible]me the norm in later years.

The individualistic explanation of poverty which was prevalent throughout American society was informed by the current conceptions of man, society, and religion. Laissez-faire liberalism and an individualistic religious creed fused to form a powerful ideological force. As Bremner (1964) has pointed out, to Americans in the ante-bellum era, poverty was unnecessary, but differences in the ability and virtue of men made the existence of poverty inevitable, since without the fear of privation the masses would not exert and there would be no incentive for the talented to excel. Where it existed, poverty was a temporary phenomenon, and both in its cause and cure, it was an individual matter. This view both followed and departed from the traditional religious view. The inevitability of economic inequality was accepted because it supposedly conformed to God's overall scheme for man, but the existence of poverty was attributed to man's own failure. An illustration of this amalgamation of religious and secular perspectives was provided by the Humane Society which stated in 1809: "By a just and inflexible law of **providence**, misery is ordained to be the companion and punishment of **vice**" (quoted in Jacob, 1968;

emphases added).

The adoption of classical economics as the orthodox economic theory during the ante-bellum period has been noted. Numerous American citizens also shared the conviction of the economists. The remarkable economic performance, rapid industrialization, and the relative ease in absorbing millions of mostly impoverished immigrants "proved" the efficacy of the laissez-faire system. To most Americans, free enterprise capitalism worked. The attitudes of classical political economists toward destitution were not entirely unexpected. Their emphasis on individualism, state nonintervention, and free competition led naturally to an essentially individualistic interpretation of poverty. For example, in Malthus's opinion, the poor must be taught "that they are themselves the cause of their own poverty; that the means of redress are in their own hands, and in the hands of no other persons whatever" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 7). American classical economists were quick to echo this point of view. George Tucker attempted to show that Malthus was right in so far as people had only themselves to blame for their poverty. Cooper, Cardozo, and Wayland also agreed with Malthus that public relief only encouraged economic dependency. They believed that the poor laws destroyed the natural stimulus of self-help and encouraged the poor to rely on society instead of themselves. Samuel Newman, author of **The Element of Political Economy**, argued that the poor should not envy the rich, for the rich man's wealth was the fruit of his industry and frugality. Since it was believed that people had equal chances to acquire wealth, those who failed should not envy the prosperity of others and complain about their lack of it (Conkin, 1980; Dorfman, 1946).

The poor law reform of 1834 symbolized the triumph of economic individualism in England. The objectives of the Reform Act were the abolition of support for those who were unable to fend for themselves through gainful employment and the complete assumption of responsibility by the able-bodied for their own economic security. The contract society, whose seeds were sown in the mercantilist era, became fully mature in the official rejection of status commitments and public responsibility for economic welfare. In America, public assistance policies showed striking parallels with the recommendations of the English Poor Law Commission. A series of state reports in the 1820's in New York, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania closely resembled the English trends.

Other forces also operated to enhance the individualistic conception of man and society, and indirectly promoted an individualistic interpretation of poverty. Transcendentalism, Christian perfectionism, and the frontier mentality all contributed to the development of a theory of personal causation with respect to poverty. By helping to discredit the traditional notion that misery and destitution were an inevitable aspect of human condition, the Enlightenment made it appear that the poor were personally responsible for their plight. Transcendentalism and Christian perfectionism further reinforced this individualistic interpretation.

The frontier and the mentality it generated strengthened the prevalent attitudes toward the poor. The optimism, based on the belief in infinite opportunities, persuaded Americans that suffering and destitution were unnatural and unnecessary conditions in such a rich country. It convinced Americans that the poor always had a final escape: they could "go west" to start afresh. Robert Hartley, who served for more than thirty years as Secretary of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, believed strongly in the frontier solution. "Providence has bestowed upon us a vast extent of unoccupied territorial surface, with a fertile soil and genial climate," he observed in 1850, "if the hale and vigorous cannot earn their subsistence here, they should earn it elsewhere." In his opinion, the greatest kindness that could be shown to the poor was "to cause them, if necessary by vigorous measures, to choose the interior for their home, where, by honest industry, they may recover self-respect and independence, and become blessings instead of burdens to the country" (quoted in Bremner, 1964a: p. 38). As well, the vigorous frontier individualism described by Turner was compatible with the individualism derived from free enterprise. Both types of individualism opposed aid and intervention and believed that individuals were responsible for their own fate and must bootstrap themselves.

Matthew Carey reported what his contemporaries felt about the causes of poverty. People were convinced that the suffering and distress of the poor arose chiefly, if not wholly, from their idleness, dissipation, and extravagance. They also believed that poor relief was pernicious because it fostered idleness and improvidence, and thus produced the poverty and distress it was intended to relieve (Mencher, 1967).

Although people tended to make the obligatory distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor, they believed that the great majority of those in need belonged to the latter category in the face of statistical evidence to the contrary (Coll, 1963). Most people held the opinion that in most cases, poverty could be traced to vice and deserved to be treated accordingly. For instance, the excessive use of alcoholic beverages was often labelled as "the cause of causes" of pauperism. "We may consider intemperance as the most prolific source of degradation," declared one member of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (quoted in Trattner, 1979: p. 62). Of the 132 Connecticut towns that answered the questions of a legislative committee in 1852 on the extent and causes of pauperism, only Union in Tolland County, with thirteen paupers, mentioned "want of employment" as the cause. The most frequent responses were "intemperance" and "immigration." Unemployment and other economic factors were conveniently ignored (Klebaner, 1980).

It is revealing to observe how individuals, whose business was to assist the indigent, explained poverty. Although the Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor in New York and the Children's Aid Society promoted incidental reforms, it was the belief of their founders, Robert Hartley and Charles Loring Brace, that the major causes of poverty were laziness, lack of application, and moral laxity (Davis, 1967). Hartley wrote: "Every able-bodied man, in this country may support himself and family comfortably; if you do not, it is probably owing to idleness, improvidence, or intemperance" (quoted in Mencher, 1967: p. 270). Similarly, the New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism made known its view: "No man who is temperate, frugal, and willing to work need suffer or become a pauper" (quoted in Trattner, 1973). Again, in its 1819 Annual Report, the Society noted that nine-tenths of the city's poverty and wretchedness "proceeds directly or indirectly from the want of correct moral principle...." (quoted in Heale, 1968).

These attitudes toward poverty were reflected in the way the poor were treated. The objective of most charity organizations was not so much to help the needy as to combat moral degradation. For instance, the constitution of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor identified the goal of the organization as "the elevation of the moral and physical condition of the indigent; and so far as compatible with these objects, the relief of their necessities" (quoted in Trattner, 1973). The New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism declared in 1819 that the character of the poor could be improved and destitution eradicated only "by inculcating religion, morality, sobriety, and industry, and by diffusing useful knowledge among the indigent and laboring people" (quoted in Mohl, 1972: p. 943). Theordore Sedgwick wrote profusely on the causes and effects of poverty. He maintained that poverty arose from ignorance or deficiencies of character in individuals and thus would yield only to instruction and self-help. The American poor, he stated, could overcome poverty by hard work and frugality (Conkin, 1980). These views partly reflected the work ethic that was still an extremely powerful and pervasive belief in American society (Rodgers, 1979).

All in all, the explanations of poverty given during the ante-bellum era were mostly individualistic in nature. Poverty was blamed on the poor themselves. Social responsibility for economic adversity received little recognition. This, it has been argued, was largely attributable to economic individualism and laissez-faire liberalism which were the dominant trends of thought in this period.

FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE 1920'S

The period from the Civil War to the Great Depression, like the early modern period, was a transitional era with regard to attitudes toward poverty. On the one hand, it was during the post-bellum years that the individualistic interpretation of poverty became most widely accepted. On the other hand, there were clear indications that the individualistic point of view was becoming increasingly anachronistic. With the maturation of the capitalist economy, new schools of thought emerged, generating new modes of explanation. These new ideas - the social interpretations of poverty - were at first expressed hesitantly and with reservation; but gradually they acquired a status of respectability and became as important as, if not more important than, the individualistic explanations.

Structural Transformation

The Civil War brought massive destruction to America, particularly in the South. It mained, widowed, and orphaned tens of thousands of people. Major endeavors were made after the war to relieve and assist the veterans and other victims of the armed conflict. Few questioned the causes of the suffering. It was generally accepted that the social and economic dislocation was the inevitable consequences of the war. But as the wound started to heal and as the memory of the war faded, the old attitudes and views toward poverty returned. They returned with added strength because the post-bellum industrial growth and economic prosperity convinced most Americans that their socioeconomic system was basically sound and that their faith in laissez-faire liberalism had been vindicated. The individualistic perspective became the orthodox interpretation of poverty and wealth.

The prevalence of individualistic explanations of poverty after the Civil War and the gradual reemergence of the social interpretation were very much related to the social and economic transformation during this period and the concomitant changes in social, religious, and economic thinking. The socioeconomic processes, initiated during the ante-bellum period by population increase, urbanization, territorial expansion, economic growth, and industrialization continued almost unabated, with the exception of a brief interruption due to the Civil War. The American economy was still primarily agricultural in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is during the period from the Civil War to the Great Depression that America emerged as the world's greatest industrial power. The nation continued to grow both in size and in population. During the last four decades of the century, the number of states increased from thirty-three to forty-five. Territorial expansion was accompanied by population gain. The American population of 36 million in 1865 more than doubled to 76 million in 1900. During the same period 13 million immigrants poured into the United States, hoping to seek a better life in the new homeland.

Population growth, whether through natural increase or immigration, provided the needed labor for industrialization and an expanding market for consumer goods. Every sector of the economy was growing by leaps and bounds. For instance, in 1850 America had less than 10,000 miles of railway. By 1900 the country had 200,000 miles of tracks

– roughly the combined mileage of all European nations. The production of coal and iron increased dramatically. By 1900 the United States was making a third of the world's steel. The gross national product rose from about $6.7 billion to about $16.8 billion during the last three decades of the century. Equally important was the spread of industrialization to less developed regions of the country. Thus, by the turn of the century, the United States had attained the status of a major economic and industrial power (Curti et al., 1953).

The two to three decades after the Civil War were a thriving period for capitalistic advantures, rapid industrialization, and economic growth. But by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the American economy appeared to have fully matured. Substantial changes were observable in the output, as well as the structure, of American industry. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, only a few corporations other than railways were capitalized at $10 million. By the early twentieth century, the number of such corporations had increased to about 300, of which approximately fifty were capitalized at more than $50 million; seventeen at more than $100 million; and one, United States Steel, at almost $1.5 billion. During this period, some of the largest American trusts were created: Standard Oil, Consolidated Tobacco, American Smelting, and United States Steel. By the eve of the First World War, supercorporations dominated coal, agricultural machinery, sugar, telecommunication, public utility, iron and steel, railways, oil, tobacco, and copper. The control of American industry had passed from the hands of individual owners and enterpreneurs to professional managers who were responsible to a board of directors often controlled by a small and powerful group of financiers and capitalists (Axinn and Levin, 1975).

Although the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the Supreme Court's order to dismantle Standard Oil had prevented total market domination by large corporations, it did not substantially change the monopolistic nature of American capitalism. What resulted was a situation of "monopolistic competition" among a handful of major corporations. Competition was maintained in advertising, service, and quality, but not in price, which was fixed by intercorporation "understanding." The free market competition situation of the early and middle nineteenth century was never to return (Curti et al., 1953). The American economic conditions during this period were aptly described by Commager (1955):

> The control and exploitation of natural resources by private individuals or corporations was concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few... Giant corporations, built up by such business captains as Rockefeller, Carnegie, and James Hill, were thrusting small business into a hopelessly subordinate position. Finance capitalism, in the hands of men like J. P. Morgan, George F. Baker, and Jacob Schiff, was shifting the control of industry from the builders to the bankers and converting the directorates of many corporations into a tightly knit structure; the findings of the Pujo Committee of 1912 went far to justify the popular term "money trust." The farmer, selling in a world market and buying in a protected one, and confronted by far-reaching scientific and technological changes, was being forced to the wall. For the new economic world that rose above the horizon at the end of the century, the old orthodox economic theory was as irrelevant as the old orthodox theological theory for the new world of science (p. 227).

The economic transformation was accompanied by two other developments that had substantial effects on American society during this period: the closing of the frontier and the reduced chances of upward mobility. For over half a century, Americans saw the resourceful but relatively unpopulated continent as a means to solve the problems of unemployment, poverty, and lack of opportunity in cities. Orestes Brownson's warning, voiced in 1840, that the wilderness had receded so far that new lands were already beyond the reach of the ordinary people, went unheeded. But by the end of the century, the frontier had virtually been closed. There were very few habitable areas that remained unexplored and unoccupied. Henry Demarest Lloyd declared in 1884: "Our young men can no longer go west; they must go up or down" (quoted in Bremner, 1964a: p. 21). This declaration signifies the end of an era.

Americans also discovered that their chances of "going up" were equally limited. Although Americans, under the influence of laissez-faire individualism, firmly believed that the American class structure was fluid, studies have found that there is more fiction than facts in this rags-to-riches theory, even prior to the rise of monopolistic capitalism. While a few authors (e.g., Gutman, 1977) are able to document the upward mobility of self-made men, most writers (e.g., Gregory and Neu, 1962; Pessen, 1973; and Thernstrom, 1964) tend to agree with Miller (1962) who sardonically points out that poor boys who become business leaders have always been more conspicuous in American history books than in American history. By the end of the nineteenth century, even Americans had come to realize that diligence, individual initiative, and entrepreneurial spirit could no longer guarantee them a place in the upper social strata. The growth of big corporations further constrained the sphere of individual action. The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed a concentration of wealth similar to the centralization of corporate power. As the nation prospered, the growth at the upper social strata far exceeded that of either the middle or the working class. In 1899, the richest 1.6 percent of the population accounted for 10.8 percent of the national income. By 1910, their share of the national income had gone up to 19 percent (Axinn and Levin, 1975). It is in recognition of this stratification process that ex-President Rutherford B. Hayes, writing in 1890, complained about "the wrong and evils of the money-piling tendency of our country" which were "giving all power to the rich and bringing in pauperism and its attendant crimes and wretchedness like a flood" (quoted in Garraty, 1968: pp. 310-11). Richard Ely also lamented the widening gulf between the social classes: "Never before had there been seen in America such contrasts between fabulous wealth and absolute penury" (quoted in Gettelman, 1963: p. 314).

Ideological Changes

These economic and social changes during the sixty odd years from the Civil War to the Great Depression were reflected in substantial ideological shifts. It was during the two to three decades after the Civil War that laissez-faire individualism reached its height and was most widely espoused. Laissez-faire individualism found in social Darwinism its principal spokesman. As Hofstadter (1966) has observed, in the three decades after the Civil War, it was impossible to be active in any field of intellectual work without mastering Herbert Spencer, the founder of social Darwinism. But Spencer's doctrine were imported into North America from England long after individualism had become a national creed. Social Darwinism served the conservative cause in two ways. First, the Darwinian slogans, "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest," when applied to the social domain, justified the economic status quo. It promised a bright future by suggesting that the competitive process would induce unceasing social progress. Second, the idea of development over aeons reinforced the belief that all natural social processes were slow in the making and would not be hastened or redirected by artificial intervention.

The most influential American social Darwinist was William Graham Sumner. He successfully welded into one coherent doctrine three great traditions of Western capitalist culture: the Protestant ethic, classical economics, and Darwinian theory. Basing his major premises on Spencerian ideas, Sumner whole-heartedly supported the principles of laissez faire. The first fact of life, he proclaimed, was the struggle for survival. The major benefit of this struggle was the production of capital, which was the bedrock of economic and social progress. The survival of the fittest necessarily implied the existence of social inequality. Indeed, Sumner asserted that the principle of social evolution inevitably negated the traditional American beliefs in equality and natural right.

Closely related to the Darwinian doctine of the survival of the fittest was the celebrated American belief in the equality of opportunity. The rapid economic growth and general prosperity in the Gilded Age convinced many Americans that their society, unlike European societies, was an essentially open one that offered boundless opportunities for everybody. Although there were class distinctions, social stratification merely mirrowed individual differences in intelligence, industry, and initiative. While the successful would move up the social ladder, those who failed to make it would move downward or stayput. The novels of Horatio Alger and the biographies of William Makepeace Thayer perpetuated this myth of rags to riches.

As Lerner (1963) has remarked, however, one of the paradoxes of American social and intellectual history is the fact that laissez faire reached its height as a system of economic thought at the very time when its doom as a system of economic organization was already evident. The restructuring of American society and the changing needs in political economy, particularly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, were reflected in new social, religious, and economic thinking. The structural basis of these new schools of thought was often to be found in the socioeconomic changes in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is Polanyi's (1944) contention that the expansion of the market economy inevitably begets protective counter moves in the form of collectivist reactions. He maintains that, in the case of America, as long as a free supply of land, labor, and money continued to be available, man, nature, and business needed no government protection. However,

> (as) soon as these conditions ceased to exist, social protection set in. As the lower ranges of labor could not any more be freely replaced from an inexhaustible reservoir of immigrants, while its higher ranges were unable to settle freely on the land; as the soil and natural resources became scarce and had to be husbanded; as the gold standard was introduced in order to remove the currency from politics and to link domestic trade with that of the world, the United States caught up with a century of European development: protection of the soil and its cultivators, social security for labor through

> unionism and legislation, and central banking – all on the largest scale – made their appearance (p. 202).

The reactions against laissez-faire liberalism and the social and economic order it supported were at first feeble, inhibited, and isolated. They were individual expressions of concern and bewilderment that the reality of late-nineteenth-century America had deviated from the accepted social ideals. However, individual frustrations and apprehensions soon coalesced to become organized protests and mass movements. These included the Progressive, social gospel, populist, and settlement movements. Not content with attacking the weaknesses of laissez-faire liberalism, they offered alternative economic theories and social philosophies.

The subordination of agrarian democracy to the fast growing commercial and economic interests sparked the protest of populism. The populists looked backward with nostalgia to the lost agrarian paradise and the republican America of the early nineteenth century. Their traditional adherence to self reliance was threatened not only by natural calamities, but also by railway abuses, market instability, manipulations by middlemen and moneylenders, and government fiscal policies. The farmers were among the first to discard the liberal world-view and to openly advocate the regulation of private business and increased government responsibility for the commonweal (Bremner, 1964a; Hofstadter, 1955).

The Progressive Movement was an attempt by the middle class to deal with the problems arising from the new socioeconomic order by means of organized government intervention. The Progressives proposed a dual approach to deal with these problems, particularly the dangers from the extreme left and right. They feared both the arbitrary power of a plutocracy and the revolutionary potential of the impoverished masses. Their program called for a reform of the business order by restoring competition and an improvement of the economic position of the working class. Supporters of the Progressive Movement were deeply concerned about the existing social problems: the increasing frequency and bitterness of industrial strifes, the destitution of a large number of people, the exploitation of women and child labor, and the appalling working conditions in many factories and mines. Their concern was due to a genuine desire to help the victims of economic exploitation and the fear that social conflict of a massive scale would eventuate if the condition was allowed to deteriorate. On the other hand, the

Progressives were deeply troubled by the ever increasing power of private business and the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. They, therefore, turned to the government for solutions (Hofstadter, 1955).

In the early nineteenth century, an authoritarian religious doctrine was replaced by a more democratic creed of salvation through individual regeneration. This transformation resulted in an emphasis on personal morality. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, it had become evident that the prevailing social and economic conditions were not at all conducive to individual moral uplifting. The rise of the social gospel movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was in part a response to the perceived contradiction between an emphasis on individual morality and a realization of the powerful and unwholesome social forces that impinged on the individual. The distinguishing feature of the social gospel movement was its insistence that society, even more than individuals, stood in need of redemption. Social gospelers such as Washington Gladden, Theordore Munger, Josiah Strong, Richard Ely, and John R. Commons strongly objected to the ethical implications of laissez-faire individualism. Unlike evangelical Protestantism, the social gospel did not hesitate to question the status quo and to attribute individual imperfections to overall social maladjustment. Theordore Munger, in his **The Freedom of Faith** (1883), was one of the first to present a systematic statement on the social gospel. The individual, he maintained, was so much a part of the society in which he lived that it would be impossible to save individual souls without first redeeming society. Many important leaders of the Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Robert La Follette, were influenced by the social gospel. It also made a profound impression on the middle-class supporters of Progressivism. The social gospel made it possible for Progressives to promote reform in the name of Christianity. It imparted authority to their cause and provided social reformism with a link with tradition (Bremner, 1964a; Fine, 1969).

Joined in the revolt against the established Protestant Church was the social Christianity movement. As Gutman (1977) has noted, while the social gospel was essentially a middle- and upper-class reformist movement, social Christianity was largely a working-class protest movement in the Gilded Age. It originated from the Christian perfectionism and post-millennialism of ante-bellum evangelical and reform movements.

This religious faith justified trade unionism and labor agitation, motivated workers to challenge the new industrialism, and sanctioned social reforms. The **Journal of United Labor** chided clergymen who supported the free enterprise system: "The Church which allows the competitive system of each for himself, without a never-silent protest, is not a living Christian church; for 'each for himself' is a gospel of lies. That never was God's decree" (quoted in Gutman, 1977: p. 103). Together, the social gospel and social Christianity movements challenged the religious establishment and its endorsement of the existing socioeconomic order.

In response to and reflecting the substantially altered socioeconomic conditions in the country; new schools of thought emerged from sociology, economics, philosophy, Christian theology, and social work. The legitimacy and efficacy of laissez-faire individualism as an ideology were increasingly called into question by the new intellectuals and social thinkers. For instance, Washington Gladden, a historical school political economist and a prominent social gospeler, regarded the overthrow of classical political economy as "the first business of the Christian Church." Richard Ely, as the spokesman of the historical school of political economy, stated: "While we recognize the necessity of individual initiative in industrial life, we hold that the doctrine of laissez faire is unsafe in politics and unsound in morals...." (quoted in Commager, 1955: p. 234). Social Darwinism, as an embodiment of laissez-faire individualism, bore the brunt of the attack. Lester Ward, an important figure in early American sociology, was one of the first prominent thinkers to challenge the tenets of social Darwinism. In his critique of Sumner's **What Social Classes Owe to Each Other**, he declared:

> The whole book is based on the fundamental error that the favors of this world are distributed entirely according to merit. Poverty is only a proof of indolence and vice. Wealth simply shows the industry and virtue of the possessors. The very most is made of Malthusianism, and human activities are degraded to a complete level with those of animals (quoted in Hofstadter, 1966: p. 79).

Others soon joined in the onslaught against social Darwinism. These included social gospel Christians, sociologists such as Albion Small and Edward Ross, social reformers such as Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and Henry Damarest Lloyd, and philosophers like John Dewey. They questioned the assumptions and discredited the arguments of social Darwinism.

The criticism directed at social Darwinism was only a more focused attack on a broader target – laissez-faire liberalism. The belief elements of classical liberalism, such as the normic model of society, individualism, the concept of natural law, and the ideal of a noninterventionist state, were challenged one by one by its opponents. The evolution from an agrarian, relatively simple society to a highly developed commercial and industrial society precipitated much of this ideological shift. As society became more complex and the social units more interdependent, there was a growing awareness that society was an organic whole and that the welfare of an individual was inseparable from the collective well-being. The individual was no longer seen as capable of standing on his own, but was generally regarded as the product of his social and physical environment. The individualism of Jackson, Emerson, and Sumner, which emphasized the primacy of the autonomous, self-sufficient individual and freedom from any sort of social constraint, was attacked. Rev. George N. Boardman of Binghampton, New York, a social gospeler, regarded individualism as a "segregating, selfish, centrifugal force that dissipates society" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 175). Morality, he emphasized, was social not individual. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, individualism was given a new interpretation. It had come to mean freedom to participate and cooperate in society. In this modern sense, it was expressed in terms of a person's ability to contribute to the welfare of the collectivity, of which he was an integral part. This new interpretation recognized the need for coordination and interdependence in an increasingly complex society (Ward, 1964). This point of view was more and more advocated by social scientists. Charles Horton Cooley, for instance, devoted the entire first part of his book, **Social Organization**, to "demonstrating the classical proposition that man is a social animal, against the profound American sentiment that opposes self and society.... Man owes the form of his individuality not to his own creative ego but to the creative collectivity" (quoted in Gregor, 1968: p. 322). Similarly, Federick Winslow Taylor, commonly regarded as the father of scientific management, said in 1906:

> The time is fast going by for the great personal or individual achievement of any one man standing alone and without the help of those around him. And the time is coming when all the great things will be done by the cooperation of many men in which each man performs the function for which he is best suited, each man preserves his individuality and is supreme in his particular function, and each man at the same time loses none of his originality and proper personal initiative, and yet is controlled by and must work harmoniously with many other men (quoted in Ward, 1964: p. 68).

Classical economists tended to describe the social world as guided by natural laws analogous to those governing the universe. Human interference with such laws, it was claimed, would bring about adverse consequences. It was Sumner's belief that "the life of man is surrounded and limited by the equilibrium of the forces of nature, which man can never disturb, and within the bounds of which he must find his chances" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p.84). The belief in natural law provided considerable justification for upholding the status quo and rejecting social change. It is therefore not surprising that it was espoused by many businessmen. "Oh, these grand immutable, all-wise laws of natural forces," exclaimed Carnegie, "how perfect they work if human legislators would only let them alone. But no, they must be tinkering" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 103). However, the obsession with natural law did not go unchallenged, particularly in the latter part of the nineteenth century. A prominent Episcopalian clergyman, R. Heber Newton, criticized those who "make a fetish of natural law." He emphasized that man "can largely command the natural law of society just as he so largely commands the natural law of the physical world" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 183). Similar criticisms were made by social scientists such as Lester Ward.

It gradually became apparant to the opponents of laissez-faire liberalism that the belief in natural law was essentially a guise for a let-alone policy in the realm of human affairs. However, the new social and economic reality in late nineteenth century called for intelligent social intervention in the public interest. The emergence of big business and the substantial reduction in free competition forced business, government, and intellectual leaders to look beyond the hackneyed slogans of laissez faire for solutions to pressing social and economic problems. For instance, Henry Adams, one of the most influential economists of the historical school, challenged "the universality of the rule of noninterference." The major flaw in the arguments of laissez faire, he pointed out, was the assumption that every individual, by working to advance his own interests, inevitably enhanced the collective [illegible]ell-being of society. The state should and must intervene in cases where this assumption did not hold true (Garraty, 1968).

Even big business had come to realize the necessity of government intervention in economic matters to protect against irresponsible business conducts and to maintain a certain degree of market and economic stability. As Weinstein (1968) puts it, government and big business began to recognize each other. Cooperation and planning replaced confrontation and anarchy. Economists, social gospel Christians, and social philosphers all advocated the need for planning and for the government to play a more active role. Simon Nelson Patten, an economist of the historical school, promoted the virtue of national planning. Richard Ely, another historical school economist and a prominent social gospel Christian, advised the Church to utilize the state as a means to secure necessary reforms. "God," he asserted, "works through the state in carrying out His purposes more universally than through any other institutions" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 180). Henry George and Edward Bellamy decried the lack of planning and urged the government to take a more active role in order to keep pace with social progress. These social philosophers helped create a more responsive attitude toward social change through conscious planning.

At the same time, more and more Americans came to recognize the necessity of state intervention to protect the individual against big business, big labor, and other powerful vested interests. They sensed their individual powerlessness and turned to the government for support and protection. This sentiment was best captured by William Dean Howells who said in 1894:

> The struggle for life has changed from a free fight to an encounter of disciplined forces, and the free fighters that are left get ground to pieces between organized labor and organized capital (quoted in Hofstadter, 1955: p. 216).

There was also a fear that big conglomerates, because of their enormous wealth and power, would dominate all other interests and would emasculate American democracy and pluralism. Woodrow Wilson reflected this general apprehension when he said:

> If monopoly persists, monopoly will always sit at the helm of the government. I do not expect to see monopoly restrain itself. If there are men in this country big enough to own the government of the United States, they are going to own it (quoted in Hofstadter, 1955: p. 233).

More and more Americans came to see the government as the only force effective and powerful enough to counterweigh big business and private wealth. Citizens were also seeking government protection against the vicissitudes of an unregulated economy. There were four major depressions during the second half of the nineteenth century: 1857-1862, 1873-1879, 1883-1885, and 1893-1896. While a few people benefitted handsomely from the boom-and-bust fluctuations, tens of thousands of ordinary people suffered through unemployment and loss of savings and investments.

The period between the mid-1880's and the early 1890's was the watershed in the development of American social thought. It is Garraty's (1968) opinion that in the eighties, laissez faire found few defenders with innovative ideas. While poeple like Lester Ward, Woodrow Wilson, and political economists of the historical school were still in the minority in their respective professions, they practically dominated the creative social thinking of that period. After 1890, the collectivist proclamation was no longer a voice in the wilderness. Although the old rhetoric continued to be heard, it could no longer drown out the increasingly powerful arguments of the anti-laissez-faire advocates.

Explanations of Poverty

An examination of the views toward poverty shows that during the first two to three decades after the Civil War, most of the expressed views on the causes of poverty were individualistic in nature. In other words, poverty was explained mainly in terms of the characteristics or behaviors of the poor. This point of view appeared to receive fairly wide support, particularly among clergymen, businessmen, and academics. Christian leaders of the establishment Church generally saw property as a sacred right and regarded inequality as natural. It was commonly accepted that those who were economically successful were men with desirable intellectual and moral qualities, whereas those who had failed to make it were people with undesirable attributes. "God," proclaimed the eminent churchman, Henry Ward Beecher, in 1877, "has intended the great to be great, and the little to be little" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 119). However, wealth and poverty were not merely the results of predestination. According to Beecher, it was a "general truth" that "no man in this land suffers from poverty unless it be more than his fault - unless it be his **sin**" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 119; original emphasis). Similar views were expressed by other religious leaders. Russell Conwell, a Baptist clergyman, asserted, "The number of poor to be sympathized with is very small.... To sympathize with a man whom God has punished for his sins, thus to help him when God will still continue a just punishment, is to do wrong, no doubt about it" (quoted in Gutman, 1977: p. 82). Roswell D. Hitchcock of Union Theological Seminary maintained that capital was the product of intelligence, self-denial, and control. He stated: "At bottom, it is an immorality to fight against the inequality of condition, which simply corresponds with inequality of endowment" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 120). By identifying the wealthy with the godly and the talented, and the poor with the immoral and the inferior, churchmen provided strong religious and moral defence for the rich and their riches.

The fact that in the Gilded Age the prominent businessmen were actively justifying and defending their economic position is not surprising. The arguments advanced by them were similar to those used by Protestant churchmen: economic success was the fruit of virtues, abilities, and exertion; economic failure was the consequence of immorality, incompetency, and laziness. In his book, **The Successful Men of Business**, Benjamin Wood explained that success was "nothing more or less than doing thoroughly what others do indifferently" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 98). According to S. C. T. Dodd, solicitor for Standard Oil, poverty continued to exist in a land of plenty "because nature or the devil has made some men weak and imbecile and others lazy and worthless, and neither man nor God can do much for one who will do nothing for himself" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 98).

This doctrine of individual determination of economic status was also endorsed by many in the intellectual community. Academics provided justifications for the existing socioeconomic order. "The poor," said one economist, "are not poor because the rich are rich... The poor are a great deal less poor and a great deal less numerous than they would be, except for the service of capital, of which they enjoy the greater part of the benefit" (quoted in Fine, 1969: p. 59). The social Darwinists were probably the most important intellectual defenders of this point of view. William Graham Sumner (1969) stated in 1883:

> But the weak (referring to the disadvantaged) who constantly arouse the pity of humanitarians and philanthropists are the shiftless, the imprudent, the negligent, the impractical, and the inefficient, or they are the idle, the intemperate, the extravagant, and the vicious (Vol. I, p. 476).

In another occasion, he admonished, "Let every man be sober, industrious, prudent, and wise, and bring up his children to be so likewise, and poverty will be abolished in a few generations" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1955: p. 61).

Social Darwinism generated a related type of explanations, explanations in terms of hereditary differences among people. Dugdale's study of the Jukes was often cited to support the argument that heredity was a cause of pauperism. Heredity and personal inadequacies were combined to explain the genesis and persistence of economic want. For instance, Sumner (1969) asserted, "In the last analysis, therefore, we come back to **vice**, in its original and **hereditary** forms, as the correlative of misery and poverty" (Vol. II, p. 93; emphases added). Similarly, Dr. Charles Hoyt's study on the causes of poverty in 1875 concluded that:

> Most cases of pauperism are due to idleness, improvidence, drunkenness, or other forms of vicious indulgence, which are frequently, if not universally, hereditary in character. Insufficient attention has been given to hereditary factors, and society must take positive measures to cope with them (quoted in Schneider and Deutsch, 1969: p. 27).

It only took a small step to move from an argument based on inept individuals to a theory predicated on inferior races. Poverty was commonly associated with the Irish even before the massive Irish immigration during the 1840's. The racial inferiority arugument resurfaced in the late nineteenth century with the heavy inflow of impoverished Eastern and Southern European immigrants. It was argued, for example, that the Polish were poor because they were ignorant, lazy, and dirty (Betten, 1973; Mencher, 1967).

The popularity of the individualistic interpretations of poverty reached its zenith in the latter part of the nineteenth century. At the same time, structural explanations were slowly gaining acceptance. There were clear indications that more and more Americans were dissatisfied with the traditional interpretations of poverty and were seeking alternative perspectives. Reflecting the conflicting ideological forces, two major schools of thought with respect to the etiology of economic dependency confronted each other during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The cross current of opinions was observable in the changing and conflicting points of view.

A typical example is Josephine Shaw Lowell, a prominent figure in the charity organization movement. Her views on poverty and charity reflected the conflicting influences that were brought to bear on many thoughtful social reformers during that period. While conscious of the role played by environmental factors in poverty, she regarded the intellectual and moral character of the poor as inferior (Saveth, 1980). She was convinced that "the usual cause of poverty is to be found in some deficiency – moral, mental, or physical – in the person who suffers" (quoted in Bremner, 1980: p. 199). Commenting on the character of the poor people, she said, "(Since) their distress is due to inherent faults, either physical, mental or moral, it becomes very difficult to cure it" (quoted in Gettelman, 1963: p. 329). On the other hand, referring to the workers made unemployed by the depression of 1893-1896, Lowell said that the causes of their destitution were "as much beyond their power to avert as if they had been natural calamities of fire, flood, or storm" (quoted in Bremner, 1964a: p. 22).

The same kind of conflicting opinions was found in the works of Amos F. Warner, the general agent for the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore and one of the founders of modern social work. Despite his awareness of the importance of environmental factors in the generation and perpetuation of poverty, he emphasized character defects as an immediate cause of economic dependency. While pointing out that almost half of the poverty cases were attributable to unemployment and illness, his 1894 book, **American Charities**, listed evil associations, unwise philanthropy, indolence, lubricity, and unhealthy appetites as other causes of poverty (Axinn and Levin, 1975).

The Charity Organization Movement often made statements that reflected divergent views on the causes of poverty, particularly toward the end of the nineteenth century. "The cause of poverty," James Hyslop wrote in **Charity Review** in 1894, "vary between incompetency, shiftlessness, and allied defects in constitution and character, **economic conditions being only incidental**" (quoted in Gettelman, 1963: p. 328; original emphasis). However, a study conducted in the 1890's by the New York Charity Organization Society indicated that lack of employment was the most frequent cause of poverty, sickness and accidents second, while shiftlessness and intemperance were causes in only 10 percent of the cases (Trattner, 1979).

An examination of historical records shows that many social reformers, who were active during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, changed their perspectives on poverty. The early reformers tended to employed the individualistic interpretation. But toward the end of the nineteenth century, many charity workers came to realize that poverty must be understood in a broader socioeconomic context. It was believed that pauperism could be eradicated only by raising the overall living standard. With this change in orientation, "scientific philanthropy" evolved into the newer movement of preventive social work (Bremner, 1980).

A study was done by Speizman (1965) on the changing perspectives of leading American philanthropists by examining the **Proceedings** of the Committee on Charity

Organization of the National Conference of Charity and Correction during the twenty-one years of its existence from 1880 to 1900. The etiology of pauperism was a perennial discussion topic at the sessions sponsored by the Committee. Although no single point of view emerged as **the** attitude of the charity organization movement, most of the session speakers espoused the Malthusian and Manchestrian theories of poverty: pauperism resulted from immorality, laziness, excessive reproduction, almsgiving, or failure in the race for survival. These views were particularly prevalent during the initial years. Mixed explanations began to appear later on, probably symptomatic of the emergence of new social theories which, however, were not yet powerful enough to dislodge the orthodox views. For instance, at the 1891 meeting, Hannah M. Todd of Lynn, Massachusetts carefully balanced the personal and societal causes of pauperism. "Broadly speaking," she explained, "the chief causes of poverty are vice and shiftlessness – internal conditions relating to individual character – and lack of employment or insufficient earnings, caused largely by external or social and industrial conditions" (quoted in Speizman, 1965: p. 147). The records of the Committee for the remaining years of its existence revealed increasing disagreement over the relative importance of various causal factors. In 1892, the President of Colorado College vehemently denounced indiscriminant almsgiving as "a crime against society." But P. W. Ayres, General Secretary of the Associated Charities of Cincinnati, opposed this view. Arguing that poverty and the existing industrial system were intimately related, he said:

> If the conditions of labor are improved, fewer persons are likely to fall from the ranks of dependence. If men have better wages and more leisure, fewer women and children will have to toil beyond their strength. If men can earn more, they can save more.... and fewer widows and children come to want (quoted in Speizman, 1965: p. 147).

Such views became more common in the early years of the present century. The president of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections stated in 1906 that the dominant idea of modern philanthropy was "a determination to seek out and to strike effectively at those organized forces of evil, at those particular causes of dependence and intolerable living conditions which are beyond the control of the individuals whom they injure and whom they too often destroy" (quoted in Hays, 1957: p. 80).

Under the influence of Progressivism, populism, the social gospel, and social Christianity, more and more Americans came to see poverty as a product of institutional and structural factors. While not denying that individual shortcomings could lead to economic hardship, progressive social reformers and intellectuals insisted that poverty arose mainly from impersonal causes rather than from personal weaknesses. Unemployment, low wages, poor working conditions, and high living costs were now seen as the main factors giving rise to pauperism. In his influential study, **Poverty**, published in 1904, Hunter essentially expressed this new point of view:

> There is unquestionably a poverty which men deserve, and by such poverty men are perhaps taught needful lessons.... In other words, there are individual causes of poverty which should be eradicated by the individual himself, with such help as his family, the teachers, and the preachers may give him....
>
> But as surely as this is true, there are also the poor which we must not have always with us. The poor of this latter class are, it seems to me, the mass of the poor; they are bred of miserable and unjust social conditions, which punish the good and the pure, the faithful and industrious, the slothful and vicious, all alike.... (Men) are brought into misery by the action of social and economic forces. And the wrongful action of such social and economic forces is a preventable thing (Hunter, 1967: p. 127).

Hunter's view was shared by many of his contemporaries. President E. B. Andrews of Brown University, for instance, pointed out prophetically one year before the 1893-1896 depression that the worst aspect of the modern industrial system was that it frequently visited curses on men through events for which they were not responsible. Under existing circumstances, Andrew wrote, "a great many men are poor without the slightest economic demerit. They are people who do the best they can, and always have done so.... Yet they are poor, often very poor, never free from fear of want" (quoted in Bremner, 1964a: p. 21). Similarly, in 1909, Edward Devine, Josephine Shaw Lowell's successor at the New York Charity Organization Society, proclaimed that "personal depravity is as foreign to any theory of the hardships of our modern poor as witchcraft or demoniacal possession.... These hardships are economic, social, transitional, measurable, manageable" (quoted in Rodgers, 1979: p. 226). The change in attitudes toward poverty and its causes, as reflected in these pronouncements, was both dramatic in tone and far-reaching in implications.

Even before the intellectuals and social reformers turned to social explanations of poverty, the American farmers had by and large renounced the individualistic interpretation of economic hardship. Despite their traditional adherence to self-reliance, the farmers saw and experienced the effects of poverty-producing factors, over which they had little control. Similarly, under the influence of social Christianity, many working-class people rejected the individualistic view on poverty. The traditional belief that economic hardship was sanctioned by God was rebuked: "Do you think it is anything short of insulting to God to pretend to believe He makes of ninety-nine paving material for the one to walk into Heaven over?" (quoted in Gutman, 1977: p. 103). Although the individualistic interpretation of poverty was by no means moribund, its validity was increasingly questioned and its influence considerably weakened at the turn of the century.

Summary

During the sixty odd years between the Civil War and the Great Depression, the United States witnessed a major transformation of its economic and social structure, as well as of its ideological and value systems. A firm, industrial foundation was laid in the mid-nineteenth century, and slightly more than half a century later, the American economy underwent a substantial restructuring: from a laissez-faire capitalism based on entrepreneurship and competition to a matured, monopolistic, corporate capitalism. The ideational transformation was no less radical. This is indicated by the evolution from social Darwinism to the social gospel, from classical liberalism to welfare liberalism, from individualism in the normic sense to individualism in the organismic sense, from the negative freedom of John Stuart Mills to the positive freedom of John Dewey, and from the conception of the state as a necessary evil to the conception of the state as an instrument to further the general well-being of its citizenry. It is argued that the gradual loss of appeal of the individualistic interpretation of poverty and the growing strength of the social analysis of economic dependency during this period can only be understood within the context of these social, economic, and ideational transformations.

Like the period following the Civil War, the decade after the First World War was a time of confidence and contentment. Historian Schlesinger (1957) described the 1920's as "an era of enchantment, where everything was rosy and romantic, where diamonds were as big as the Ritz, where for a brief decade, as Fitzgerald saw it, the wistful past and the fulfilled future seemed mingled in a single gorgeous moment" (p. 145). Although critical thinkers like Herbert Croly, John Dewey, Charles Beard, and Thorstein Veblen were busy at work during the 1920's, demolishing old superstructures and erecting new ones, the third decade of the present century was not a good time for the progressive cause. The reaction against Progressivism began soon after the war was over. Opulence and optimism convinced many that the old ways – laissez faire, rugged individualism, and business leadership – were, after all, the best ways, and that reforms and agitations were mostly unnecessary. Reflecting this national mood, President Herbert Hoover proclaimed in 1928: "(We) shall soon with the help of God be within sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation."

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Jazz Age, F. Scott Fitzgerald told us, "as if reluctant to die outmoded in its bed, leaped to a spectacular death in October, 1929." The collapse of the stock exchange plunged America into the greatest crisis since the Civil War. The opulence and optimism, the confidence and contentment of the previous decade all vanished. Instead, Americans experienced confusion, insecurity, and often despair. It was estimated that there were 13 million unemployed workers in 1933. There is no need to document the many dramatic events that took place between the Wall Street crash and the outbreak of the Second Wrold War except to mention that the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 ushered in the New Deal era.

The Structural and Ideological Scene

The New Deal programs included direct Federal relief to the unemployed, TVA, Civilian Conservation Corps, Farm Credit Act, Home Owners Loan Corporation, National Recovery Administration, Agricultural Adjustment Act, Wagner Labor Relations Act, Social Security Act, National Youth Administration, Work Projects Administration and Farm Security Administration. Despite the numerous programs and bustling activities, and despite the rhetorics of the President and outcry from his critics, it is generally believed that, instead of introducing a "creeping socialism," the New Deal only sought to tame and reform the system of private property and free enterprise. As Chambers (1965) has noted, the New Deal administration presented no logically consistent, formal system of social thought. It was a mixture of pragmatism and moralism, reflecting Roosevelt's beliefs in humanitarianism, religious faith, the conservation of natural and human resources, and the need for social balance and individual security. Historian Leuchtenburg (1963) also pointed out that at no time had the President seriously considered the introduction of a planned economy or challenging the rationale of private profit. Unconventional projects like the TVA and social security were never allowed to interfer and compete with the capitalist system.

Despite the basically nonradical nature of the New Deal, collectivist ideas were much more widely accepted by the American people during the depression era. The laissez-faire response to the national crisis was found wanting and the validity of the ideology of individualism was also called into question. Americans lost faith in Herbert Hoover who, in the face of economic collapse, rejected the need for reform and, instead, counselled Americans to have faith in "the American Way:"

> Victory over this depression and over our other difficulties will be won by the resolution of our people to fight their own battles in their own communities, by stimulating their ingenuity to solve their own problems, by taking new courage to be masters of their own destiny in the struggle of life. This is not the easy way, but it is the American way. And it was Lincoln's way" (Hoover, 1931).

The year 1932 witnessed the dumping of Hoover by the electorate and the election of Franklin Roosevelt, events that can be interpreted as the American people's renounciation of hackneyed ideas and the desire for fundamental changes. In many respects, the New Deal was related to earlier reform movements, particularly the Progressive Movement. Although the dominant ideas of the depression decade – the new economic thinking, the welfare state concept, and the beliefs in planning and a positive state – represented the continuation and further development of major trends of thought of the preceding period, the crisis of the 1930's gave them a new significance. Their messages became more relevant, their arguments were less likely to be brushed aside, and their practical implications were, probably for the first time, taken seriously. These interrelated ideas gave the New Deal administration the inspiration and justification for carrying out the reforms needed to solve the country's grave problems.

Although laissez-faire economics came under heavy criticism from the historical school of political economy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was still the mainstream economic theory in America. Indeed, after the First World War and the brief recession of 1920-1921, traditional social and economic theories enjoyed a period of revival. Viner, Dickinson, Garver, and others promoted laissez-faire economics with renewed vigor. But at the same time, classical and neoclassical economics was confronted by other critics, the most important of whom was J. M. Keynes. The basic tenets of Say's Law - the assumptions that the economy would always absorb all the commodities it was capable of producing and that full employment was part of the natural order of things - were questioned by Keynes. He insisted that there was nothing in the economic system to ensure that consumption and investment would generate enough output to make full employment possible. In other words, the system was not an automatically self-adjusting one. He pointed out that if demand was left to itself, it would not guarantee full employment and that unemployment was a normal phenomenon under typical patterns of economic activities (Stewart, 1972).[3] The economic paralysis in 1929 and subsequent years helped discredit orthodox economics and set the stage for a major revision in economic thinking.

Perhaps the most important practical implication of Keynes's theory is that the national economy could function properly and efficiently only if it is planned and maintained by government. He defended the need for government action and rational planning to stabilize the economic forces. The central controls needed to ensure full employment, Keynes (1936) wrote, would naturally require a considerable extension of the traditional functions of government. This argument provided theoretical justifications for substantial and continuous economic interventions by government and for the establishment of a welfare state.

Keynesian theory reinforced the arguments for national planning put forth in the 1920's by Dewey, Croly, Veblen, and Beard. Dewey played a leading role in promoting the cause of social planning. He advocated the application of creative social intelligence to the problems facing the nation. He pointed out that since the piecemeal approach was futile, only controlled social planning and organized collective effort could advance the common good. In **Individualism, Old and New**, Dewey argued that the old ideal of individualism had been perverted to conform to the practices of a pecuniary culture. The choice facing modern society was between the anarchic collectivism of business conducted for profit and the planned collectivism of public authority. Only democratic collectivism, he asserted, could create the conditions for a new and authentic American individualism (Schlesinger, 1957). The havoc and suffering brought about by the economic paralysis dissipated the distrust toward the government and planning. Probably for the first time in American history, most Americans expected the government to take a leading role in formulating national social and economic strategies. Planning was no longer seen by most people as constraining individual freedom. Instead, it was seen as a means to protect and promote individual liberty and societal well-being. Franklin Roosevelt understood well the desire of the American people and did not hesitate to employ the government as a means to overcome social and economic problems. In his second inaugural address in 1937, he stated:

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[3] The significance of this shift in economic thinking is underscored by the fact that nineteenth-century classical economists absolutely refused to even consider the argument that economic dislocations and the attendant problems of unemployment and poverty could be due to over-production and under-consumption. For instance, in 1877, the United States Monetary Commission maintained in its report that "(the) idea that either superabundant wealth or superabundant facilities for producing it can be inciting cause of rapidly spreading poverty is repugnant to the common sense of mankind." The report added that it was "the idlest of fancies, and wholly unworthy of serious notice" (quoted in Rodgers, 1979: p. 117).

> Instinctively we recognized a deeper need – the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered. For, without that aid, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the services of science which are necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men (Roosevelt, 1965: p. 70).

The emphasis on social planning meant, in practical terms, that the focus of social action would be on changing institutions rather than reforming individuals. Unlike the charity workers of the nineteenth century, the new reformers sought not to remould individuals but to improve the environment and the system in which they functioned. "In other words," Rexford Tugwell, one of Roosevelt's close advisers, stated bluntly, "the New Deal is attempting to do nothing to **people**, and does not seek at all to alter their way of life, their wants and desires" (quoted in Leuchtenburg, 1963: p. 339; original emphasis). The underlying assumption of this point of view was that given a decent environment and a just system, most social problems would disappear. This contrasts sharply with the individualistic and moralistic views popular in the previous century. This new outlook undoubtedly affected the causal interpretation of poverty and the policies designed to deal with the economic distress.

This change in attitudes toward planning was facilitated by a weakening of the ideology of individualism. Historian Romasco (1965) has aptly described the effect of the economic catastrophy on this sacred American creed. "The Great Depression stood as a great revelation. It revealed the intricate complexity of the modern economic apparatus; it made man's dependence fully evident; and it thoroughly exposed the impotence of the individual in modern society. The individualistic creed, the cherished inheritance of an earlier, simpler society, was shown to be not only inappropriate but an actual hindrance in the struggle against the economic collapse" (p. 6). The helplessness of the individual in a complex and intractable industrial society was made most apparant in the Depression era. In a message to Congress in 1934, Roosevelt said:

> Security was attained in the earlier days through the interdependence of members of families upon each other and of families within a small community upon each other. The complexity of great communites and of organized industry make less real these simple means of security. Therefore, we are compelled to employ the active interest of the nation as a whole through government in order to encourage a greater security for each individual who composes it (quoted in Mencher, 1967: p. 333).

The emphasis on security and the common good implied the general acceptance of the concept of the welfare state. The "purchasing power thesis" advocated by the New Dealers provided an economic justification for the welfare-state policies introduced during the Depression era. According to this thesis, the inequitable distribution of purchasing power created a situation in which consumptive capacity failed to catch up with productive forces, resulting in the economic crisis of the late 1920's and the 1930's. The key to economic recovery, it was argued, was increased mass purchasing power which could be attained by measures to effect a more equitable distribution of income: higher wages, shorter working hours, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, and graduated taxation (Rosenof, 1975). The welfare-state ideals were embodied in Roosevelt's second Bill of Rights which was part of his 1944 State of the Union Message. The second Bill of Rights stipulated the basis for providing all citizens with security and prosperity. It included the right to employment, the right to adequate medical care, and the right to protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment.

Explanations of Poverty

There is some evidence that the traditional individualistic conceptions of economic success and failure persisted during the depression era, at least among certain segments of the population. At the height of the depression in the mid-1930's, sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd (1937) returned to "Middletown" (Muncie, Indiana) in which they had carried out in-depth social investigations during the prosperous 1920's. The Lynds found that the economic dislocation had not substantially altered the "small businessman culture" in this Midwestern city. The small businessmen still held firmly to the beliefs that "You win if you're any good and your winnings are caused by you and belong to you," and "If a man doesn't make good it's his own fault" (p. 24). However, there is even stronger evidence that, for the majority of the people, poverty was increasingly seen as arising from social and economic maladjustments.

In the early days of the depression, the media focused on personal misfortune and human interest stories about upper- and middle-class people who sank into poverty. However, as this became commonplace, the public tended to pay more attention to unemployment and economic dislocation as the major causes of distress. The gradual acceptance of Keynesian economic analysis, rational social planning, and the ideals of the welfare state also helped change the public's perspective on poverty. The analysis of the etiology of poverty did not stop at the personal level. Instead, the causes of poverty were often traced to structural problems endemic in the social and economic system. The causes of and remedies for poverty were sought within the larger social environment. Grace Coyle's presidential address before the National Conference of Social Work in 1940 reflected this new public perception:

> Until the mass unemployment of this period developed there was a lingering belief born of our pioneer individualism that if people were out of work or were paid low wages, it was sign of individual shiftlessness or incompetence. That belief was largely washed out in the flood of the depression. True, it still remains here and there.... But the bulk of our citizens, I believe, has accepted the fact that the mass of personal misfortunes arising out of the depression is socially caused....
>
> Arising out of the depression experience is a new conviction slowly dawning on the American people. We are beginning to see that disasters which are socially caused must be socially cured (Coyle, 1965: pp. 88-89).

The introduction during the depression era of the insurance concept of risk to major contingencies of life such as unemployment also indicates a significant shift away from the emphasis on individual fault and personal onus (Mencher, 1967).

The individualistic analysis of poverty no longer held sway. Even when personal factors were stressed, they were not viewed as moral shortcomings, but were regarded as manifestations of social malfunctioning. The focus was on the inability of the economic system to provide adequately for many of its members. Keynes pointed out that the major faults of the economic system were its inequitable distribution of wealth and its inability to ensure full employment. Unemployment was due to the absence of work rather than the unwillingness to work. The Great Depression, with widespread unemployment affecting millions of people who could not conceivably be labelled lazy, put supporters of the individualistic interpretation of poverty on the defensive and lent support to Keynes's concept of involuntary unemployment and the New Dealers' "purchasing power thesis." Even President Hoover, the undaunted opponent of the New Deal, had to admit: "We are projected into temporary unemployment, losses and hardships. In a nation rich in resources, many people were faced with hunger and cold through no fault of their own" (Hoover, 1931). While the President refused to identify the causes of economic distress, the fact that he did not lay the blame on individuals was significant.

Other writers and the public also agreed that economic distress was largely attributable to impersonal factors. I. M. Rubinow, for example, maintained that the causes of poverty "must be found in the fluctuation of business, not in his (the worker's) mental capacity or dexterity. These are fixed rather than variable factors" (quoted in Mencher, 1967: p. 362). Frances Perkin, Secretary of Labor in the Roosevelt administration, told a Congressional subcommittee that the individual workman "is utterly helpless, because he is in a situation in which there is no work. The result is we cannot look to individual initiative to help these people through the unemployment crisis" (quoted in Romasco, 1965: p. 127). Similarly, the 1930 edition of the **Nation** pointed out:

> The worker today does not and cannot control the conditions of employment; he is likely at any time to find himself out of a job by reason of causes entirely unrelated to his acts and choices (quoted in Romasco, 1965: p. 127).

In his 1932 election platform, the Socialist Party leader, Norman Thomas (1966), stated: "Unemployment and poverty are inevitable products of the present system. Under capitalism the few own our industries. The many do the work. The wage earners and farmers are compelled to give a large part of the product of their labor to the few" (p. 56). Such a statement coming from a socialist is no surprise. What is worth noting is the fact that while the Socialist Party came nowhere close to electoral victory in 1932, the sharp gain in votes by the Party indicated the growing acceptance by the electorate of the socialist economic diagnosis and its views on the causes of poverty. Similarly, Harry Hopkins, one of Roosevelt's most influential advisers, confessed in 1936: "I have gone all over the moral hurdles that people are poor because they are bad. I don't believe it. A system of government on that basis is fallacious" (quoted in Sherwood, 1948: p. 84).

New Deal programs helped millions of Americans survive the hardship of the Great Depression, but it was World War II which really ended the decade of economic dislocation. Although many of the principles and policies of the New Deal were carried over to Truman's Fair Deal and his Employment Act of 1946, like the post-bellum era and the period after the First World War, the return to relative prosperity in the wake of the Second World War also means the return to a more conservative ideological climate. As historian Leuchtenburg (1963) has observed, the more successful the New Deal was, the more it undid itself. The more prosperous the country became, the more people returned to the old values associated with an individualistic, success-oriented society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis in the last and the present chapter is a study of social and ideological changes. The effects of social transformation on ideology were briefly described. The effects of ideological changes on the evolving perspectives on poverty were examined in greater detail. We were able to identify at least three broad categories of explanation: providential explanation, structural explanation, and individualistic explanation. Furthermore, we were able to show that although all three kinds of explanation were found in all the major historical periods, the various categories of explanation were not given equal importance in all periods. Each historical epoch was characterized by its unique way of explaining the existence of poverty. For instance, providential explanations were the dominant explanatory mode in the Middle Ages; individualistic explanations were prevalent during the latter part of the early modern period in England and in the period from the American Independence to the Civil War; structural explanations were most frequently used during the mercantilist phase of the early modern period and the period of the Great Depression. All this leads us to believe that how people causally understand poverty is not a random or haphazard phenomenon, and that the way people in a particular historical period explain social phenomenon is closely related to the nature of that period.

Additional investigations show that the ideological atmosphere of a historical period plays an important role in shaping the way poverty is interpreted. It was found that the prevalence of providential explanation in the Middle Ages was related to the fact that the teaching of the medieval Church was the major source of ideological legitimation. Similarly, the popularity of the individualistic mode of explanation during the ante-bellum era was a function of the dominance of the liberal ideology and individualism. The intimate relationship between ideology and attribution is further underlined by the fact that in those historical periods where a number of major belief systems or ideologies were found to coexist, there were no dominant modes of explanation. Instead, explanations of various nature were used, occasionally by the same person. This suggests that people in those periods were under the ideological influences from a number of sources.

The determinants of ideological changes were also examined. It was shown that changes in the way people viewed society, individual, and wealth and the transformations in social structure generally went hand in hand. Thus, we were able to demonstrate the close interrelationships between social structure, ideology, and explanations of poverty.

The fact that structural explanations were prevalent during the mercantile phase of the early modern period and the American colonial era, virtually disappeared in the ante-bellum period, and resurfaced in the latter part of the post-bellum period is of special significance. It suggests that there may be certain common belief elements in the social philosophy of mercantilism and the emerging collectivist and reformist ideologies in late-nineteenth-century America. Although seventeenth-century English mercantilism and nineteenth-century American Progressivism differ considerably in nature, they share certain common beliefs. And it is because of these common belief elements that similar modes of explanation are found in two very different historical periods. Our analysis has been able to identify some of these belief elements. Of particular importance are the conceptions of the individual and society and the relationship between the two. In other words, closely related to explanations of poverty are beliefs such as the normic or organismic conception of society, individualism, collectivism, and belief regarding the role of the state. These belief elements appeared and reappeared in various historical periods under different guises and labels. The way poverty was causally interpreted depended to a large extent on how they were mixed in the total ideological package of an age.

The historical analysis did not proceed beyond the era of the Great Depression. It is not that the contemporary period is unimportant for the present study. Instead, the contemporary period will be studied in much greater detail. It will be examined in a very different way. And the next three chapters are devoted to studying the explanation of poverty in contemporary American society.

V. STRUCTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF EXPLANATION: FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

The purpose of the last two chapters is to demonstrate the fact that attribution behavior is not an invariant phenomenon over time. More specifically, explanations of poverty were shown to have changed from one historical period to another. It was also posited that the changes were primarily due to the transformations of the socioeconomic structure and the concomitant evolution of social thought. In the present chapter we look at causal attribution from a different angle. Instead of investigating how explanations change over time, we examine variations in attribution among social collectivities at one point in time. As mentioned in Chapter II, contemporary pluralistic society is characterized by a high degree of differentiation and segmentation. The existence of social groups with diverse existential bases is likely to generate different world-views and ideological orientations. Thus, if the general hypothesis of this study concerning the relationships between social structure, *a priori* theory, and attribution is tenable, one would expect social groups to explain poverty differently in accordance with their diverse interpretations of the social world. If the analysis in Chapters III and IV is a longitudinal analysis with time as the basic dimension, Chapters V - VII can be regarded as a cross-sectional analysis with social differentiation as the prime focus.

These two sets of analysis also differ in another important respect: the source of data. When the changing views on poverty are examined from a historical perspective, the major source of information is written historical records in the form of books, sermons, official documents, speeches, articles, etc. The analysis in this part of the thesis, on the other hand, is based on survey data collected for the purpose of social research. A related point is worth mentioning. In the case of the historical analysis, the views of the elite are over-represented. This is almost inevitable since prior to the invention and popularization of survey research and public opinion polls, there was no means to ascertain how the public at large felt about certain issues. Furthermore, before mass education was the norm, only members of the elite group were literate and educated enough to record their thoughts in black and white. The introduction of public opinion polls in the present century changed all this. By means of sample surveys, the views and beliefs of cross-sections of the population can now be collected and studied. Thus, in a sense, the cross-sectional analysis is truly a study of the explanations of social phenomena by the average citizens as "naive psychologists." Methodologically, the analysis of survey data should be able to clarify certain relationships among variables which are only implicit when a historical analysis is done.

PREVIOUS EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The notion that social classes and groups explain poverty differently is not a new one. A number of studies have demonstrated this fact. Alston and Dean (1972), for example, analyzed the findings of a 1964 Gallup poll on how people viewed poverty. The question asked was: "In your opinion, which is more often to blame if a person is poor, lack of effort on his part, or circumstances beyond his control?" Those who were more inclined to blame the poor themselves for their economic plight were the males, the younger, the well-educated, and those employed in managerial, clerical-sales, and farming occupations. Skilled workers, professionals, and low-status blue-collar workers were less likely to blame the poor. Lower-status white-collar workers tended to have the most negative view toward the poor.

A study done by Rytina, Form, and Pease (1970) in Muskegon, Michigan in 1966-67 showed that the rich respondents were much more convinced than the others that wealth was a result of favorable personal attributes. Among the wealthy, 72 percent felt this way; but only 17 percent of the poor Negroes believed that wealth was attributable to positive personal characteristics. Conversely, more of the rich than the poor were convinced that poverty was the consequence of undesirable personal qualities. Sixty percent of the rich and 17 percent of the poor Negroes supported this view. Thus, the findings generally confirm the authors' hypothesis that persons with higher incomes support tenets of personal responsibility for an individual's economic status, while the poor place greater emphasis on social structural explanations.

Ashmore and McConahay (1975) analyzed the results of a 1967 public opinion survey. The data showed that 42 percent of all Americans blamed the poor themselves for their poverty, and only 19 percent explairied poverty in terms of external environmental factors. A further analysis shows that the tendency to cite "lack of effort" as the cause of poverty rose with increased income and education. Those in the upper socioeconomic strata chose this explanation 15 percentage points more often than those in the lower strata.

Free and Cantril (1968) reported a study in which respondents were asked to explain the existence of poverty. One-quarter of the respondents attributed poverty to "circumstances;" 34 percent to "lack of effort;" and another 38 percent believed that both causes were responsible; and 3 percent answered "don't know." When the results were stratified by family income, those in the $10,000-and-over income group were much more likely to attribute poverty to "lack of effort" than those in the under-$5,000 income group.

A nation-wide survey was conducted by Feagin (1975) in 1969 to find out how Americans explained poverty. Eleven causes were grouped into three broad explanatory categories: individualistic explanations, structural explanations, and fatalistic explanations. The findings showed that individualistic explanations - e.g., improvidence, laziness, and loose morals - were most often used. Significantly less attention was paid to social structural factors. The author also noted that "emphatic individualism" was not randomly located. Major strongholds of individualism were to be found among whites, Southerners, older Americans, and those at the middle socioeconomic levels, while nonwhites, Jewish Americans, the young, and those at lower socioeconomic levels tended to endorse structural explanations.

Different societies also tend to be dissimilar in the way their citizens causally interpret poverty, as a few studies have found. Feagin's study was replicated in Adelaide, Australia by Feather (1974). In some respects, the results of the two studies were quite alike. The order of importance assigned to the causes was roughly the same in the two samples. But the American respondents were more likely to attribute poverty to personal factors than the Australian respondents. Reasons that reflected the so-called Protestant ethic were given greater emphasis by the Americans. A study of a much larger scale was sponsored by the Commission of the European Community (1977) in 1975. One of the questions asked in the public opinion survey in the Common Market countries was: "Why, in your opinion, are there people who live in need?" Four reasons were given to the respondents to choose. Sixteen percent of the respondents chose "Because they (the poor) have been unlucky." A quarter of the respondents selected "Because of laziness and lack of will power." An explanation of a structural nature - "Because there is much injustice in our society" - was used by 26 percent. And another 14 percent thought that poverty was "an inevitable part of modern progress." The rest answered either "None of these" or "Don't know." An examination of the answers by country revealed distinctive national differences. Italians and French tended to attribute poverty to societal factors. In Britain, and to a lesser extent in Ireland and Luxembourg, the tendency was to lay the blame on the poor themselves. Fatalistic explanations were most commonly given in Denmark.

These studies clearly show that causal attribution is not an invariant social phenomenon. Groups with different demographic and socioeconomic characteristics tend to explain poverty in different ways. However, there are three main problems with these studies. First, the categorization of variables is often very crude. For example, some studies categorized respondents into the "poor" and the "non-poor" groups. Such broad classifications tend to mask more complicated relationships between structural factors and attribution. Second, some of the findings are not consistent. For instance, while Alston and Dean (1972) reported that the young were more likely to blame the poor for their economic plight, Feagin (1975) noted that younger respondents were inclined to explain poverty in structural terms. Some of these inconsistencies could be due to inadequate or incompatible categorization of variables. Third, and most important of all, nearly all of these studies are purely descriptive in nature. The relationships between structural factors and explanations are acknowledged but usually not elucidated. There is, of course, nothing wrong with descriptive studies as such; but the advance of sociological knowledge requires a higher level of analysis, namely, the integration of empirical relationships with theoretical paradigms.

It is our contention that these relationships can best be accounted for by postulating the role of *a priori* theory as an intervening mechanism that bridges social structure and attribution. Putting this general argument in the context of the present study, it is posited that individuals with the same existential base are likely to share a similar ideological perspective which, in turn, tends to guide them toward a similar explanation of poverty. That the explanation of poverty is affected by an individual's ideological and value orientation has been noted by a few researchers. Besides examining the structural correlates of attribution, some of the studies cited earlier also examined the relationships between attribution and religious beliefs. Both the study by Feagin (1975) and the replication study by Feather (1974), for example, showed that religious beliefs played a role in determining the way poverty was explained. Both studies found that Protestants were more likely than Catholics to attribute poverty to lack of thrift and effort. The role of religiosity in determining a person's "individualism" or "social determinism" was also emphasized in a study by Zeitz and Lincoln (1981).

The role of political ideology and value orientation was examined in a few studies. A 1964 Gallup poll (Gallup, 1972) found that among individuals who claimed to be conservatives, 41 percent attributed poverty to "lack of effort" and 26 percent blamed it on "circumstances." On the other hand, among liberals, 25 percent attributed poverty to "lack of effort" and 37 percent blamed it on "circumstances." Other Gallup poll surveys examined the differences between Republicans, Democrats, and Independents with respect to explanations of poverty. In a recent study done in Britain, Furnham (1982) has found that political party support is related to how poverty is causally understood. Those who voted for the Conservative Party tended to offer individualistic explanations for poverty. Conversely, supporters of the Labor Party found societal explanations more important. There were no group differences with respect to fatalistic explanations which were not rated as important in understanding poverty. However, these studies generally failed to treat the effects of value orientations on attribution as part of a complex set of interrelationships involving structural factors, value orientations, and explanations. The study carried out by the Commission of European Community (1977) was one of the very few studies that posited an interrelationship between these three sets of factors. Commenting on the national variations in the way poverty was explained, it said:

> In spite of the fact that the phenomena of poverty and deprivation are perceived by the public with different intensity and different connotations from one country to the next, doubtlessly because of **the objective situations of these countries** and, in particular, the actual place such phenomena occupy in each national culture, there is confirmation of the fact that, within each country, **the value systems are a powerful filter** which, as the case may be, prevents, reduces or magnifies perception and colours connotations differently, particularly **the attribution of poverty to such and such a cause** – the individual (guilty) or society (unfair) (p. 101; emphases added).

Unfortunately, the data and the analysis of this study are less than adequate.

The above literature review has shown that although the effects of structural factors and ideological and value orientations on explanations are generally recognized, considerable work remains to be done. More importantly, much of the empirical analysis was carried out in a theoretical vacuum. The purpose of this analysis is not only to examine how social groups vary in the way they explain poverty, but also to demonstrate the role of ideological beliefs as a linkage between structural factors and explantions of poverty.

A NEW SOCIAL CLASS-IDEOLOGY CONFIGURATION

Much of the following discussion is based on studies by E. C. Ladd, Jr. (1969, 1976, and 1978) who has argued that socioeconomic transformations and political changes in the United States since the 1930's have produced a new social class–ideology configuration that is substantially different than that found during the Depression years. It will be argued that if the postulated relationships involving social structure, *a priori* theory, and attribution are true, then attributions made by various social groups should reflect this new class–ideology configuration. In the 1930's and indeed through to the 1950's, the fundamental class conflict was between the middle class and the working class. The former was more inclined to conservatism, and the latter liberalism. Similarly, the college educated were more conservative than persons with high–school or grade–school education, since most of the college students were drawn from middle and upper middle strata. While the working class was disposed to fundamental social change and state intervention in economic and social affairs, the upper–income groups and the business class formed the bedrock of economic and political conservatism.

The social class–ideology configuration of the 1970's, in the view of Ladd, is a radical departure from what has just been described. This is mainly due to the structural transformation of the American economy and the changing composition of the social classes. The economic conditions for at least a sizeable segment of the lower classes have improved considerably, thus substantially altering their ideological outlook. As well, some previously unitary social classes have splintered into groups with similar socioeconomic statuses but dissimilar ideological perspectives. The situation is further complicated by other factors such as ethnicity and regional differences. All this helps create a new and much more complex class–ideology configuration.

The most important change in class structure since the Depression is the elevation of the skilled and unionized manual labor from a "have–not" to a "have" economic position. They have by and large overcome economic privation and have moved up the socioeconomic ladder. To the extent that the upper stratum of the working class has become "embourgeoised," its members can be expected to become more conservative in outlook. Their major concerns are no longer with day–to–day survival, but with inflation, high taxes, and the maintanence of a middle–class life style. Thus, one of the paradoxes of the contemporary American social structure is the presence of a working class that is largely conservative and middle class in perspective.

Ladd has shown that substantial changes have also occurred in the upper social strata. The upper middle class has discarded much of its identification with the business world. Entrepreneurial business has largely been replaced by corporate capitalism and is no longer a major collective interest. Increasingly, members of the upper middle class, who are secure, affluent, and closely identified with the professional and managerial community, have become incorporated into an emerging intelligentsia and have responded more to intellectual values than to business interests. The new intellectuals are inclined to a liberal ideological stance, and are favorable to social change. They have largely moderated their traditional ideological oppositions to state intervention. Thus, one of the primary ideological confrontations in contemporary America is waged between the "embourgeoised" working class (or the upper working class) and the upper–middle–class intelligentsia. Education has become as important as economic status in determining a person's ideological perspective.

The ideological transformations of these two major social classes have been empirically documented by Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1976). Using data from the American election studies of the Survey Research Center, the University of Michigan, these authors trace the ideological changes among various social groups from the 1950's to the early 1970's. However, in studying these two social classes, Nie and his associates differentiate those residing in the Southern states (states in the deep South and the adjacent border South) from those outside of the South. In the 1950's lower-status white Southerners were only slightly more conservative than the population as a whole. However, the moderate ideological stance of this group in the fifties was replaced by a pronounced conservative ideological shift in the seventies. In the 1950's the upper-status white Southerners were already very conservative in attitude. By the seventies this group became even more conservative. Therefore, native white Southerners became more homogeneously conservative, regardless of their socioeconomic status. For the rest of the country, the authors compare the lower- and middle-status white Protestants and the upper-status white Protestants. The lower- and middle-status white Protestants outside of the South drifted toward a more consistently conservative political view. Conversely, although there was a significant amount of opinion polarization among the high-status white Protestants outside of the South in the early 1970's, a larger proportion of this group shifted to the liberal end of the conservatism-liberalism continuum. In fact, the size of the liberal component increased in direct proportion to the socioeconomic standing. Thus, by and large, the empirical findings of Nie and his associates have substantiated Ladd's arguments. However, regional differences must be taken into consideration.

The other major ideological conflict is waged between the white upper working class and the black lower class. As pointed out previously, the skilled and unionized blue collar workers have acquired a certain level of affluence and have become what Ladd calls the new marginal "haves" who no longer sustain pressure for the extension of egalitarianism and are anxious to protect their newly acquired but still insecure economic status. Since liberal welfare-state measures frequently make them contributors rather than beneficiaries, upper-working class whites more often feel threatened than encouraged by such egalitarian policies. Blacks, on the other hand, continue to constitute a "deviating" case. Blacks are disproportionately in the lower socioeconomic strata but overwhelmingly liberal in ideology. According to Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1976), blacks, who were traditionally liberal, became even more so in the early 1970's. In the 1950's, 25 percent of all blacks were classifed by the authors to be in the most liberal decile of a conservatism-liberalism scale; in the early 1970's, slightly over 60 percent were in this category.

Ladd has maintained that the upper socioeconomic strata have expanded and have become more variegated. They no longer constitute a business class in the classical sense. As pointed out previously, a large segment of the upper strata have become a "new class" of professional-managerial intelligentsia. The rest of the upper strata are those in business. Conservatism during the 1930's was primarily espoused by individuals who made a living by owning or managing farms and companies. They were virtually united in resisting the reform policies of the New Deal. Since then, the business community has bifurcated into two major categories: the matured, bureaucratized, professional-managerial, government-utilizing business on the one hand, and the newer, more enterpreneurial, less bureaucratic, government-resisting business on the other. Although the business community as a whole continues to be the bastion of ideological conservatism, one can make a subtle distinction between the "moderate conservatism" of the former category of business and the "orthodox conservatism" of the latter category. Differences in the ideological orientations of the salaried managers of big corporations and the small business enterpreneurs appear sharp. Self-employed businessmen are far more opposed to government spending on health, education, welfare, and the environment than are corporate managers. Since World War II, American big business has increasingly adopted the "gospel of social responsibility," and it no longer opposes government intervention and welfare-state policies. Thus, the moderate conservatism of established big business tends to accept society as it is; the orthodox conservatism of enterpreneurial business, on the other hand, wants to change the socioeconomic order by obliterating the New Deal, Fair Deal, and Great Society, and starting anew.

Another group that has undergone substantial ideological shifts is the college student population. Although students, by definition, are in a transitional status and thus cannot be seen as belonging to a unique social class, their activism and their role as potential future leaders of society put them in an influential position with respect to their ideological advocacy. The student population of the 1930's and 1940's was generally conservative since college students largely came from the middle- and upper-middle class backgrounds. This conservative stance was evident even in the Eisenhower era. Students gave stronger support to the Republican presidential candidate than did the general electorate. However, by the late 1960's and early 1970's, the national college student body had shifted decisively to the left of the political spectrum. Public opinion polls showed a significant drop in Republican support among college students who were much more likely than the general population to vote for McGovern in the 1972 election. According to a Gallup poll in 1970, 37 percent of the college students surveyed described themselves as "far left" or "left" politically as against 17 percent who identified themselves as "right" or "far right" (Lipset and Ladd, 1971).

The radicalization of the college student population is in part a reflection of the liberalization of the intelligentsia since college students represent an important segment of the intellectual community. Lipset and Ladd (1971) also suggest the effects of aging and the encapsulated environment of colleges and universities as possible explanations. Whatever the reasons, the college students are a special social group that one cannot afford to overlook if one is interested in studying the ideological composition of contemporary American society.

In sum, the relationship between social class and ideology in American society has evolved from a relatively simple pattern during the Depression era to a fairly complex configuration in the 1970's. Based on the research of Ladd, Nie et al., and others, at least six social groups can be identified for the purpose of studying the relationship between social structure and ideology in contemporary American society. These are the intelligentsia as represented by the professionals, the self-employed proprietors and farmers, the upper working class, the blacks, the Southern lower working class, and the college students.

This classification of the American population leads to the first set of hypotheses for empirical testing. If there is indeed a relationship between ideology and attribution and if a person's ideological perspective is to a large extent a function of his/her position in the social structure, one would expect a relationship between social structure and attribution. However, the contemporary social class-ideology configuration can no longer be captured by unidimensional structural factors such as education and income. Therefore, when one relates unidimensional structural factors with explanations, one should find the relationships to be nonexistent or very weak. This does not necessarily mean that the way one explains poverty bears no relationship to one's structural position. It means that if the relationships are to be identified, one must take the complex social class-ideology configuration into consideration. One must examine social structure from a multidimensional perspective, by comparing, for instance, social groups that are distinctive from one another on several structural dimensions. Thus, one could expect the proponents of structural explanations to be found among those who are inclined to a liberal orientation, such as the professionals, blacks, and college students. Conversely, one could expect the proponents of individualistic explanations to be found in those social groups that are likely to endorse the conservative ideology, such as the self-employed proprietors and farmers, the upper working class, and the Southern lower working class. On the basis of this discussion, two hypotheses may be formulated:

- HYPOTHESIS 1 : There are no relationships between family income, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status on the one hand and explanations of poverty on the other.
- HYPOTHESIS 2 : Whereas professionals, blacks, and college students are inclined to explain poverty in structural terms, proprietors and farmers, the upper working class, and the Southern working class tend to explain poverty in individualistic terms.

THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

Hypothesis 2 was generated on the basis of previous research which shows that the intelligentsia, blacks, and college students have shifted to the left of the political spectrum. Conversely, the self-employed proprietors and farmers, upper working class, and Southern working class either remain where they have been or have shifted to the right. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is based on a theoretical assumption that the relationship between social structure and explanation is mediated through ideology. As the readers will recall, the general hypothesis for this entire study is that attributions are made in the context of or are informed by *a priori* theories that, in turn, are socially determined. As a form of *a priori* theory, ideology is posited to be the crucial factor in understanding how individuals explain poverty.

A question could be asked as to which aspects of ideology tend to mediate between social structure and attribution. It is worth pointing out that the historical analysis presented in Chapters III and IV has alluded to those ideological dimensions that are most likely to influence how poverty was explained. These include the notion of providence, the ideas of collective welfare, individualism, economic equality, and the roles of the free market and the state. The debates and political struggles involving the mercantilists, the emergent bourgeoisie in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, classical economists, American free enterprise capitalists, the social gospel movement, the Progressive Movement, socialists, and Keynesian economists are all directly or indirectly related to these crucial issues. Some of the politico-economic and intellectual movements such as mercantilism and Social Darwinism may have been swept aside by the forward thrust of history, but the underlying ideas of these movements often resurface in later periods under different guises.

With the exception of the notion of providence which lost popularity with the passing of the Middle Ages, all the major ideological issues discussed in Chapters III and IV are still very much alive today. They are often subsumed under the ideological umbrellas of liberalism and conservatism, particularly in the American context. But the terms liberalism and conservatism may sometimes be misleading because their meanings and connotations changed over the last two centuries. What liberalism means today is very different than what it used to mean, say, 150 years ago. As well, liberals and conservatives refer not only to individuals who have certain political and economic philosophies but also to individuals who espouse certain social values and take on certain life styles. George and Wilding (1976) have proposed a more restrictive but clearer categorization of ideology in contemporary Western societies. These authors differentiate four major ideologies: anti-collectivism, reluctant collectivism, fabian socialism, and Marxism. These four ideologies tend to span the spectrum of mainstream politico-economic ideology in Western societies. A brief discussion of these four major types of ideology will help identify those ideological dimensions that should be examined in this study.

The anti-collectivists, according to George and Wilding, are represented by such individuals as F. A. Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Enoch Powell. They are the supporters of classical liberalism of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Liberty, individualism, and inequality are the basic social values of anti-collectivists. The central idea in their conception of liberty is the absence of coercion of one individual by another. It is believed that individualism is complementary to liberty. They also maintain that liberty and substantive equality are basically incompatible. For instance, Hayek (1975) stated, "All endeavours to secure a 'just' distribution must thus be directed towards turning the spontaneous order of the market into an organization or, in other words, into a totalitarian order" (p. 68). The anti-collectivists reluctantly agree that the state has a duty to relieve poverty and suffering on the ground of charity. But this form of government activity is seen as a necessary evil rather than a positive step toward equality. They believe that the sooner the trend toward a welfare state is reversed, the better it is for society as a whole, because a passive role played by the state helps promote individualism and liberty.

In many respects, the ideology of the reluctant collectivists, represented by such individuals as J. M. Keynes, J. K. Galbraith, and W. Beveridge, is similar to that of the anti-collectivists. Both groups endorse liberty, individualism, and a free market economy. The reluctant collectivists, however, hold fewer absolute values. Their values are tempered by their belief that capitalism is not entirely self-regulating. Like the anti-collectivists, the "reluctants" emphasize the virtues of individualism, private enterprise, and self-help. They believe that capitalism is the best economic system, although it requires judicious regulation and control for it to function efficiently and fairly. With respect to equality, they believe that wealth should be more evenly distributed. For both Beveridge and Galbraith, individual welfare is their ultimate concern. Their goal is for an extension of welfare services and the protection of public interest. Galbraith criticizes American capitalism for its failure to serve individual welfare or the public good. Given their conviction that capitalism needs to be regulated and their emphasis on collective welfare, the reluctant collectivists, like the Fabian socialists, believe in the benevolent potentialities of government action. They would like to see a major expansion of government activities in at least five major areas: an attack on manifest social ills, mitigation of social imbalance, a setting of social priorities, coordination of economic planning, and as a stimulus to private enterprise. In short, the aim of the reluctant collectivists is to purge capitalism of inefficiencies and its injustice so that it may thrive. They believe that capitalism and planning are compatible, and that state intervention is needed to make capitalism morally acceptable.

A strong emphasis on equality distinguishes Fabian socialists from the reluctant collectivists. While socialists do not insist that all income should be equal, they demand a much more equitable distribution of wealth. Because of their concern for equality, socialists strongly endorse the idea of the welfare state. They give an exceptionally high priority to traditional social welfare goals and support the allocation of an increased proportion of the national income to welfare programs. Another important characteristic of socialism, as pointed out by Cole (1975), is the value it places on collective action. Socialists reject the extreme individualism advocated by the anti-collectivists. They believe that individuals are what they are largely because of the society, community, and family in which they are brought up. Not only do they believe in cooperative action as a means to improve the condition of the poor, they also stress the need for collective regulation of social and economic affairs. This implies the rejection of the philosophy of laissez faire on the one hand and the support for an interventionist state on the other. Essentially, the major task of government is to correct what socialists see as the injustices of the market system of distribution. The socialists' concern for welfare and equality thus leads to an advocacy for collective responsibility.

The Marxists generally accept the main social and political goals advocated by the socialists: emphasis on collective action, economic equality, and a government playing an active role particularly in the economic sphere. However, they do not share the socialists' optimism that capitalism can be transformed peacefully into socialism. They believe that the transformation can only be attained through class struggle. They also differ from the Fabian socialists in the faith the latter place in the ability of the welfare state to eliminate poverty and inequality and to solve other major social problems. The Marxists think that the welfare state may modify but it cannot solve these social problems because they are the inevitable outcomes of a class society. Only after a classless society is established would such problems and human suffering disappear. On the other hand, the Marxists agree with the socialists in pointing out that without a large degree of economic security and equality, freedom is virtually meaningless. To the Marxist, freedom and equality must be seen as two sides of the same coin. Thus, whereas for the anti-collectivists, liberty almost implies inequality; for the Marxists, real freedom does not exist without substantial economic equality.

It is apparent that a number of points of convergence exist between the historical analysis presented in Chapters III and IV and George and Wilding's typology of major ideologies. The major ideological beliefs that influence the ways poverty was explained in the past are the same major ideological beliefs that differentiate the anti-collectivists, reluctant collectivists, socialists, and Marxist. These are beliefs concerning individual freedom, collective action, equality, the free market, the role of the state, and collective welfare. These ideological beliefs, according to the historical analysis in the previous two chapters, tended to shape the ways people in various historical periods understood poverty. These beliefs also constitute ideological dimensions, along which individuals are located. The four ideological groupings identified by George and Wilding can be seen as four relatively homogeneous clusters of individuals situated in different locations in a multidimensional space defined by the aforementioned dimensions. It appears from this discussion, therefore, that in order to study the complex relationships involving social structure, ideology, and explanations of poverty in contemporary Western societies, one may do well to examine these and similar belief elements.

As pointed out previously, Hypothesis 2 is based on the theoretical assumption that the relationship between social structure and explanation is mediated through ideology. It is necessary to empirically ascertain the relationships between ideology and causal attribution, and between social structure and ideology. Finally, it is necessary to examine the three sets of variables together to see if ideology indeed plays a mediating role. Three broad hypothese are postulated to give direction to the statistical tests:

- HYPOTHESIS 3 : While there are no relationships between unidimensional structural factors and ideology, the professionals, blacks, and students differ from the proprietors and farmers, upper working class, and Southern working class with respect to ideological beliefs.
- HYPOTHESIS 4 : Ideological beliefs are related to the ways causal attributions are made with respect to poverty.
- HYPOTHESIS 5 : The effects of social structure on causal attribution with respect to poverty are mediated through ideological beliefs.

LOCUS OF CONTROL AS A POTENTIAL INTERVENING VARIABLE

Thus far we have been arguing that the ways individuals explain poverty are a function of their ideological beliefs which, in turn, are shaped by the individuals' locations in the social structure. Thus, by holding constant the mediating effects of ideological beliefs, the relationship between social structure and attribution should disappear. Theoretically, ideological beliefs could be one of many intervening factors. As Rosenberg (1968) has stated:

> The road traveled from the independent variable to the dependent variable may thus pass many intellectual way stages en route, each leading to the next in an endless causal itinerary. When the survey analyst deals with intervening variable, then, he is essentially dealing with **an** intervening variable, not **the** intervening variable. The discovery of an intervening variable thus cannot serve as a complete explanation of the orginal relationship, but may serve as a **landmark** on the intellectual journey from cause to effect (p. 65; original emphases).

The importance of ideological beliefs as an intervening variable depends to some extent on the ability of such beliefs, relative to that of other potential intervening variables, to account for the relationship between social structure and attribution. The more such possible intervening variables one could rule out, one could say with greater certainty that ideological beliefs are the most important, if not the only, mediating factor.

One personality factor that could be an important intervening variable between social structure and attribution is internal-external locus of control. This personality variable refers to the extent to which individuals believe that event outcomes are contingent upon their own behaviors or are determined by external forces, over which they have little or no control. Those who generally believe that they control the outcomes of events are said to possess internal control. Conversely, those who generally believe that event outcomes are determined by outside forces are said to have external control. There are literally hundreds of studies involving locus of control. No attempt will be made here to present a comprehensive review of the literature. However, a few studies will be cited to indicate why locus of control could be a significant intervening variable between social structure and attribution.

A study by Gilmore and Reid (1979) shows that successful subjects who are high on internal control attribute responsibility to internal causal factors. Conversely, external subjects who have failed are more external in their causal attributions. Levine and Uleman

(1979) obtain similar results in their study. Externals are more likely than internals to attribute their failures, but not their successes, to external factors. Studies on special population groups report similar findings. A study by Wright et al. (1980) on inmates of a reformatory shows that inmates with high internal locus of control, relative to their external counterparts, attribute more responsibility to themselves for success, even with social desirability controlled. A study of black college students by le Sure (1978) indicates that subjects who are internal on the personal dimension of control are more likely to attribute their own and others' school performance to internal factors such as ability and effort. On the other hand, students who are external on the personal level are more likely to make external attributions – luck or difficulty of task – for their own and others' academic performance. These and other studies suggest that individuals, depending on their locus of control, tend to differ in the ways they attribute causes to success and failure. Most of these studies indicate that whereas individuals high on internal locus of control are inclined to make internal attributions, individuals high on external locus of control tend to attribute event outcomes to external forces.

Other studies examine the structural determinants of locus of control. For instance, Walls and Miller (1970) find that educational attainment is positively related to the extent of internal control. Jessor et al. (1968) report that internal locus of control is positively associated with socioeconomic status. This analysis also shows that ethnic groups differ with respect to locus of control. Anglo-Americans are more internal than Spanish Americans, with Indians falling midway between the other two groups. Most studies (e.g., Lessing, 1969; Strickland, 1972) on ethnic differences find that blacks tend to be more external than whites. Similarly, Lefcourt (1972) reports that most studies on children's locus of control indicate that less advantaged children are usually found at the more external end of this personality continuum. Similar findings have been reported in more recent studies. Schmidt et al. (1978) find that middle-class subjects, relative to lower-class subjects, are more likely to believe that the realization of their hopes and fears depends on themselves. In short, there is considerable evidence to support Lefcourt's (1972) assertion that locus of control is linked to social learning within given groups.

On the basis of these findings, it is reasonable to posit locus of control as a mediating factor between social structure and attribution. However, it is the hypothesis of this study that ideology, not locus of control, serves as the intervening factor. Based on studies of locus of control, one would posit that individuals of upper socioeconomic status, such as professionals, would explain poverty internally, i.e., attribute poverty to personal inadequacies. Conversely, individuals of lower socioeconomic status, such as the blacks and Southern lower working class whites, would blame poverty on external factors. As the readers will recall, the hypotheses proposed earlier in this chapter predict very different results. Thus, two rival hypotheses could be generated, depending on whether ideology or locus of control is seen as the mediating factor between social structure and attribution. If it can be demonstrated that locus of control does not account for the relationship between structural factors and modes of explanation, the claim that ideology is the mediating factor is that much stronger. This leads to the following hypothesis:

- HYPOTHESIS 6 : The effects of social structure on attribution with respect to poverty are not mediated through locus of control.

VI. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

This chapter presents information on and discusses four areas of methodological concern. They are the nature of the data, the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, the major variables to be used in the empirical analyses, and the statistical procedures to be employed.

DATA BASE

Data from the 1972 American National Election Study are used to test the hypotheses listed in Chapter V. The survey data were collected by the Center for Political Studies (CPS) of the Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan. The CPS has been carrying out election studies for over two decades. The main objective of the 1972 study was to obtain data on the attitudes and voting behaviors of a cross-section of the American electorate. The study also measured the American people's ideological beliefs and their reactions to a number of contemporary social issues, such as poverty and racial inequality.

The study covered 2,705 respondents selected nation-wide, excluding Hawaii and Alaska, and contained 1,070 variables. Respondents were interviewed both before and after the 1972 presidential election. In order to maximize the number of questions that could be administered, two forms of the interview were used, Form I and Form II. One-half of the respondents were administered Form I of the pre-election interview schedule and Form I of the post-election schedule, while the other half of the respondents were administered Form II in both the pre- and post-election schedules. About 80 percent of the questions contained in the two forms were common to both, leaving about 20 percent as "form-unique" questions. Because most of the questions on the perceived causes of poverty appear only in the Form-II questionnaire, the effective sample for the present analysis is reduced from 2,705 to 1,072, the number of respondents answering the Form-II questionnaire in both the pre- and post-election waves. Since the sample of respondents to whom each form of the questionnaire was administered constitutes a cross-sectional sample, each of the half-samples is a national cross-section. In other words, the fact that only Form-II data are used does not affect the representativeness of the sample.

The Survey Research Center's multistage area sample was used to generate a representative cross-section of individuals aged 18 and above who were citizens of the United States living in private households. Probability selection was enforced at all stages of the sample selection. The 12 largest metropolitan areas of the country were automatically included in the multistage sampling process, and the rest of the country was divided into 62 strata, each of which contained two or more primary sampling units. A primary sampling unit (consisting of a county or a group of counties) was drawn from each stratum with probability proportional to its 1970 population. From each of the primary sampling units, a sample of private households was selected. Respondents were then chosen from these households by an objective procedure that did not allow substitution. The entire selection process produced a sample in which each individual member of the population had a known probability of being selected. The "Introduction" chapter of Miller, Miller, and Schneider's publication, **American National Election Studies Data Sourcebook, 1952 - 1978**, contains a more detailed discussion on the sampling procedure.

Data were obtained from personal, face-to-face interviews. The overall responses rate for the pre-election survey was 75.1 percent. Respondents interviewed in the pre-election wave between September and November 1972 were reinterviewed in the post-election wave between November 1972 and February 1973. A reinterview rate of 80.9 percent was achieved.

THE SAMPLE

This section briefly describes the socioeconomic characteristics of the sample. Of the 1,072 respondents, 43.4 percent were male and 56.6 percent female. About 10 percent of the respondents were blacks and 90 percent nonblacks. Because the sample consisted only of individuals who were eligible to vote, people under 18 years of age were not included. Respondents aged 25 or under accounted for 18.5 percent; 37.4 percent were from 26 to 45; 30.2 percent were aged 46 to 65; and 14 percent were over 65. Slightly above two-thirds of the interviewees were married. Those who were single accounted for 12.6 percent of the sample. About 7 percent were divorced or separated, and about 12 percent were widowed.

With respect to educational attainment, respondents with grade-9 education or less accounted for about 23 percent of the sample. Another 34 percent had an educational attainment of between grades 10 and 12. Thirty percent of the respondents had some college education. Those with a baccalaureate degree accounted for 9.6 percent, and those possessing higher degrees 3.5 percent. Of all the respondents, 590 (or 55 percent) were gainfully employed at the time of the interview. About 4 percent were unemployed or were looking for work. Slightly over 10 percent were retired or were disabled; 26.5 percent of the respondents were housewives, and another 3.2 percent were students.

The proportions of respondents in various family-income groups are as follows: 13.3 percent with family income of $3,000 or less; 18.2 percent with $3,000-$6,000; 25.8 percent with $6,000-$10,000; 21.5 percent with $10,000-$15,000; 10.9 percent with $15,000-$20,000; 4.9 percent with $20,000-$25,000; 2.5 percent with $25,000-$35,000; and 3 percent with $35,000 or more.

THE VARIABLES

The present empirical analysis involves three major sets of variables. As the readers will recall, it is posited that social structural factors shape an individual's ideological perspectives which, in turn, determine his/her attributions with respect to poverty. In addition, a rival hypothesis involving a personality variable (locus of control) as an alternative mediating factor will be tested. This section briefly discusses how these variables are operationalized.

The Independent Variables

As was suggested in the previous chapter, in examining the effects of social structure on ideology, unidimensional structural factors could be used to predict ideological beliefs. Three unidimensional structural factors will be used for this purpose: income, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status. Income is measured by the respondent's estimated family income for 1971. Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education achieved by the respondent. Socioeconomic status is indexed by a 10-category occupational classification, coded according to the Duncan decile system. It is based on the occupation of the head of household at the time of the interview or the former occupation if the head of household was no longer working.

There is another way to conceptualize the impact of social structure on ideology. Ideological beliefs can be seen as a function of the effects of various structural forces acting together. One way to test this point of view is to examine if population groups with diverse structural properties exhibit distinctive patterns of ideological beliefs. The previous chapter identified six such groups for empirical analysis: professionals, proprietors/farmers, upper working class, Southern working class, college students, and blacks. The professionals are nonblacks with at least a baccalaureate degree who work in professional or technical occupations. The proprietors/farmers are nonblacks who are self-employed proprietors or farmers. The upper working class refers to nonblack respondents who work as craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers. The Southern working class refers to nonblack respondents who live in the Southern or border states,[4] and who work in clerical or unskilled occupations. The college students are nonblack students with an educational attainment level of grade 12 or above.[5] With respect to the blacks, their racial identity overrides all other characteristics. All black respondents, regardless of their occupation, education, etc., are classified in this category.

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[4] The Southern and border states are Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

[5] Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education attained. Since most college student respondents would not have had a first degree, their educational attainment would most likely be recorded as "Grade 12." Thus, those respondents who were students and who had an educational attainment of Grade 12 were most likely to be college students.

These population groups can be seen as representing the combination or interaction of various structural factors. The Southern working class, for example, represents a combination of three structural dimensions: geographic location, occupation, and race. The professional group also represents a combination of three structural dimensions: occupation, education, and race. Since the six groups are mutually exclusive of one another, each of the six groups can also be seen as the outcome of the combination of a series of dummy variables. For example, if student status is coded "1" and nonstudent status "0" on the employment status dimension, and if blacks are scored "1" and nonblacks "0" on the race dimension, then Group 6 (i.e., white college students) is represented by "1" on the employment status dummy variable and "0" on the race dummy variable.

These six groups together account for about 42 percent of the sample. Since much of the data analysis will be performed using these six groups, it may be desirable to make fuller use of the available data by relaxing somewhat the inclusion criterion for the specially defined groups. One way to accomplish this is to use the occupations of the heads of household, instead of those of the respondents, to define the first four groups, namely, the professionals, proprietors/farmers, upper working class, and Southern working class. This will allow the inclusion of dependents, such as housewives, in these groups. For instance, if a respondent is the nonworking wife of a physician identified as the head of household, the respondent will be classified, according to this inclusion criterion, as belonging to the professional group. The reasoning here is that the structural forces that impinge upon the head of household also affect his/her immediate family members. Since the black group and the student group are not constituted on the basis of occupation, this procedure does not affect those two groups. By adopting this more liberal inclusion criterion, it is possible to increase the number of cases in the six groups to about 60 percent of the Form-II respondents. If the hypotheses were tested on these groups and the findings were in the predicted directions, one would have even greater confidence in the soundness of the hypotheses since the results are obtained from analyses based on groups that are less "pure" in their composition.

To differentiate the groups created mainly on the basis of the occupations of the respondents from those created mainly on the basis of the occupations of the heads of household, we shall call the former the "restricted criterion" groups, and the latter the "broadened criterion" groups. Parallel statistical tests will be done, using these two sets of specially constituted groups. In order to economize on space, only results pertaining to the "restricted criterion" groups will be discussed in detail. Results pertaining to the "broadened criterion" groups will be reported only if they differ markedly from those obtained from the "restricted criterion" groups.

The Intervening Variables

The intervening factors in this study are the ideology variables and the personality variable, "locus of control." Several social, political, and economic beliefs have been identified in the previous three chapters as most likely to predict explanations of poverty and to discriminate among population groups with respect to ideological perspectives. However, selection of appropriate ideology variables for the present study is somewhat hampered by the fact that this is a secondary data analysis. In other words, since the 1972 American National Election Study was designed for very different purposes, it may not contain the variables deemed most useful for the present analysis. However, there are a number of social, political, and economic belief items in the data base which may be used in the construction of indicators or scales to represent the more important ideology dimensions. The Napior (1972) nonmetric multidimensional technique for summated ratings was used to construct ideological indicators. This technique consists of a two-stage scaling procedure. Firstly, a set of items are decomposed into unidimensional subsets through multidimensional analysis of the pairwise associations among the items. This can be accomplished by using clustering techniques, smallest space analysis, or factor analysis. Secondly, Guttman's least-squares scaling procedure is applied to each unidimensional subset to obtain scale weights for response categories and scores for subjects on the dimension under consideration. This method represents a considerable improvement upon the more commonly used Likert scaling because, unlike the Likert technique, the Napior method renders unnecessary a number of often tenuous assumptions about the dimensional, distributional, and metric properties of the data.

Fourteen items on various social, economic, and political beliefs were selected. The 14 items are as follows:

1. To overcome discrimination, blacks should organize or take individual action;
2. To overcome discrimination, women should organize or pursue individual career goals;
3. To overcome discrimination, blacks should use social action or get better training;
4. To overcome discrimination, women should get better training or work together;
5. Government should/should not help minority groups to improve their social and economic position;
6. All except the old and handicapped should take care of themselves without social welfare benefits;
7. Equality has gone too far in America;
8. Government should/should not ensure that all persons have jobs and a good standard of living;
9. Federal government should/should not see to it that black people get fair treatment in jobs;
10. Federal government should/should not enforce school integration;
11. Liberalism-conservatism;
12. Government should/should not force private industry to stop pollution;
13. Government should/should not take action against inflation; and
14. Tax rate should be higher for the wealthy/same tax rate for everyone.

These 14 items were factor analyzed, using a principal factors solution with iteration and varimax rotation. The first factor extracted in the unrotated solution (column 5 in Table 6.1) reflects the existence of a common theme. Only three of the items (Item 12, 13, and 14) fail to load at least 0.30.[6] The substantial loadings on the first extracted factor, together with the relatively high common variance of the factor, suggests the existence of a general theme running through most of the belief statements. The varimax rotation of that solution yields four factors, suggesting that, in addition to a common theme, there are four distinguishable dimensions. It is apparent that the variance is not evenly spread among the four factors. Factor I accounts for about two-thirds of the variance. Factors II, III, and IV account for 15.4 percent, 10.2 percent, and 7.5 percent of the variance, respectively. Most of the items meet Thurstone's simple-structure criteria; the exceptions being Items 1, 5, and 11.

Factor I is characterized by four items (Items 1, 5, 6, and 7) with loadings greater than 0.50. Since Item 1 has an even higher loading on Factor II and, on a face validity basis, appears to go with Items 2, 3, and 4, it was decided to exclude it from the Factor-I grouping. Items 5, 6, and 7 refer to whether efforts should be made to ensure or promote greater economic equality. Thus, Factor I is identified as belief in efforts to achieve greater equality. Factor II contains four items (Items 1, 2, 3, and 4) with high loadings. These four items refer to whether inequality and discrimination should be overcome by individual efforts or through collective action. Factor II, therefore, stands

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[6] Items 12, 13, and 14 are essentially New-Deal style interventionist items. It is not known why they failed to load.

Table 6.1 Factor Analysis of 14 Ideological Belief Statements

Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	First Extracted Factor	h^2
1. Blacks should organize to overcome discrimination	.53	.55	.15	-.03	.68	.61
2. Women should organize to pursue goals	.07	.61	.09	.17	.48	.42
3. Blacks should use social action or training	.40	.44	.17	-.05	.53	.38
4. Women should be better trained/work together	.09	.67	.04	.19	.51	.49
5. Government should/should not help minority group	.54	.20	.20	.45	.70	.58
6. Only old and handicapped should receive welfare	.51	.07	.02	.16	.42	.29
7. Equality has gone too far in America	.54	.09	.19	.15	.52	.36
8. Government should/should not ensure jobs and good living standard	.22	.20	.20	.46	.51	.34
9. Government should/should not ensure fair treatment for blacks	.19	.13	.55	.21	.50	.39
10. Government should/should not enforce school integration	.18	.10	.77	.15	.54	.65
11. Liberalism/Conservatism	.41	.27	.18	.28	.58	.35
12. Government should/should not force private industry to stop pollution	.12	.03	.08	.28	.23	.10
13. Government should/should not act against inflation	-.06	.03	.11	.17	.09	.05
14. Progessive tax rate or equal tax rate	.09	.03	-.00	.25	.17	.07
Total Variance (%)	28.20	9.40	8.20	7.60		
Common Variance (%)	66.90	15.40	10.20	7.50		

for the belief in collective action vs. individual action to solve social problems. Factor III contains two items (Items 9 and 10) with high loadings. Both items refer to government intervention in racial matters. Although Item 8 has higher loading on Factor IV than on Factor III, and its loading on Factor III is relatively low, on a face validity basis, it is grouped together with Items 9 and 10. Taken together, they stand for the belief in an interventionist vs. a noninterventionist government, although the emphasis of the factor is on minority issues. Since Item 5 and Item 8, which load fairly highly on Factor IV, have been assigned to Factor I and Factor III, respectively, there are no more high-loading items in the last factor. Besides, its eigenvalue is too small to be of much significance. Thus, Factor IV is discarded. Item 11, liberalism-conservatism, presents an interesting case. It has a high loading on Factor I, but not as high as Items 5, 6, and 7. It also has relatively high loadings on Factors II and IV.

Following the factor analysis, it was decided that the three factors formed the basis for the construction of three unidimensional ideological indicators. Guttman's least-squares scaling procedure was applied to each subset of items to obtain scale weights for response categories. The scale weights for each subset of items were then summed to obtain scores for subjects. This resulted in three scales. Items 5, 6, and 7 form a scale on belief in efforts to achieve greater equality (to be identified as "Belief in Equality Scale"). Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 form a scale on belief in collective action vs. individual action to solve social problems (to be identified as "Belief in Collectivism Scale"). And items 8, 9, and 10 form a scale on belief in an interventionist vs. a noninterventionist government (to be identified as "Belief in Government Action Scale").

As mentioned, Item 11, liberalism-conservatism, seems to have a special status. It has relatively high loadings on three of the four factors, but not high enough to be included in the scaling procedure. Unlike the three composite scales which measure specific ideological dimensions, liberalism-conservativism is a multidimensional concept. Liberals and conservatives tend to differ on more than one ideological dimension. Ideally, we would have preferred not to use multidimensional indicators such as liberalism-conservatism in empirical analysis. Even if we could demonstrate the effects of liberalism-conservatism on the ways individuals explain poverty, we would still be unsure as to which aspects of liberalism and conservatism bring about such effects.

Analysis based on unidimensional indicators would probably produce more interpretable results. However, given the scarcity of belief items in the data base, we were able to construct only three unidimensional ideological belief scales and these cannot totally replace liberalism-conservatism. This is indicated by the fact that when a multiple regression analysis was done, regressing liberalism-conservatism on belief in collectivism, belief in equality, and belief in government action, only about 27 percent of the variance in the former was accounted for by the three scales. It is quite clear that the liberalism-conservatism concept contains more belief elements than the three ideological belief scales were able to capture. Presumably, had there been more belief items available in the data base, other ideological scales could have been constructed, thereby rendering the use of liberalism-conservatism unnecessary. As well, initial data analyses suggested that the effects of liberalism-conservatism on explanation of poverty differed from those of the three unidimensional scales in some respects. It was, therefore, decided to retain liberalism-conservatism as another ideology variables. This ideological belief indicator is based on responses to a single question which asked respondents to place themselves on a 7-point scale ranging from "extremely liberal" to "extremely conservative."

Generally speaking, although the results of the factor analysis are far from ideal, they provide some justification for identifying the four major ideological belief indicators that will serve as intervening variables in the empirical analysis. These four scales reflect ideological beliefs pertaining to individual freedom, collective action, equality, the role of government, and collective welfare, which have been shown previously to have substantial predictive and discriminating power.

Another set of intervening variables are related to internal-external control. There are 30 items pertaining to locus of control, many of which originate from Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. The items are mostly in a forced-choice format, with internal statements paired with external statements. Although Rotter has claimed that his scale is unidimensional in nature, a number of studies (e.g., Collins, 1974; Gurin et al., 1969; Mirels, 1970) have presented evidence, suggesting that the scale is not unidimensional. In light of these contradictory claims and findings, it is important first of all to examine the dimensionality of the 30 items.

A factor analysis with varimax rotation on the 30 items produced eight factors (see Table 6.2). Only the first three seem to be of any significance. Factors I, II, and III account for 45 percent, 17.2 percent, and 12.6 percent of the variance. None of the other factors has an eigenvalue greater than 1.0, and none accounts for more than 10 percent of the variance. Factor I contains four items (Items 4, 8, 12, and 23) with high loadings. They are all related to one's perception of the causes of success and achievement: What makes a leader, breaks or skill? Does success depend on luck or hard work? Is it luck or ability that determines who gets to be the boss? What determines who will get ahead, having the right connections or doing a fine job? In each case, respondents have to decide if success is contingent upon their own actions and relatively stable attributes or if achievement is the outcome of chance and manipulations by powerful others. The former refers to internal locus of control, the latter external locus of control.

Factor II has three items (Items 28, 29, and 30) with high loadings. Do things turn out according to plan? Would life work out the way one wants it to? Are the problems of life too big for people to handle? The content of these three items suggests that Factor II deals with people's control over the future direction of their lives. Factor III also contains three high loading items (Items 10, 11, and 27). These are: Can one make plan work or do things turn out according to fortune? Does getting what one wants depend on luck? Is life too much a matter of luck to plan ahead very far? It is apparent that Factor III is about the importance of luck and fate in shaping life events.

This factor analysis shows that locus of control contains at least three dimensions, namely, internal vs. external control, control over one's destiny, and belief in fate. Accordingly, three scales were constructed by applying the Napior scaling technique to the high loading items that define each of the three dimensions. This resulted in three unidimensional scales: the Internal vs. External Control Scale, the Control Over Destiny Scale, and the Belief in Fate Scale. The intercorrelations between these three scales are reported in Table 6.3.

The Dependent Variables

The dependent variables are 13 survey items relating to various explanations of poverty. These 13 explanation statements, in one way or another, apportion the blame to

Table 6.2 Factor Analysis of 30 Locus of Control Items

Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	h^2
1. Unhappy events due to bad luck/mistake	.27	.01	-.02	.24
2. Wars due to apathy/wars inevitable	.03	.02	-.01	.08
3. People get/will not get respect they deserve	-.38	.19	.05	.19
4. Leadership due to breaks/ability	.50	.02	-.01	.35
5. Why some people don't like you	.19	.04	-.05	.25
6. Personality due to heredity/experience	.03	-.00	.00	.08
7. Have faith in fate/one's own action	.02	-.16	-.34	.21
8. Success due to hard work/luck	-.44	.03	.30	.31
9. Do citizens have influence on government	-.25	.15	.24	.40
10. Can make plan work/futile to plan	-.13	.39	.59	.56
11. Does luck determine outcome	-.24	.11	.47	.34
12. Luck/ability determines who is boss	.50	.07	-.14	.33
13. Can people control world affairs	.15	-.06	.00	.39
14. Can society eradicate racial discrimination	.09	.07	-.03	.41
15. Does luck control lives	.23	-.10	-.08	.18
16. What makes people like you	.08	-.06	-.05	.29
17. What causes misfortune	.06	.04	-.03	.32
18. Corruption can/cannot be wiped out	-.05	.11	.12	.53

(continued)

Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	h^2
19. I have/have no influence over life	.24	-.23	-.22	.25
20. How can we win others' friendship	-.08	.13	.29	.21
21. I have/have no control over life	-.21	.37	.21	.33
22. Are people responsible for bad government	.17	-.05	.10	.23
23. Getting ahead due to contact/ability	.42	-.01	.07	.30
24. People become leaders because of ability/luck	-.37	.13	.18	.25
25. Racial discrimination can/cannot be eradicated	-.02	.08	.10	.53
26. What causes failure	.36	-.11	-.05	.32
27. Should people plan ahead	-.06	.33	.49	.39
28. Do plans usually get realized	-.09	.59	.28	.46
29. Sure that life would work out according to plan	-.08	.52	.05	.30
30. People can run own life/problem of life is too big	.08	.55	.22	.38
Total Variance (%)	16.30	7.50	6.00	
Common Variance (%)	45.00	17.20	12.60	

Table 6.3 Inter-correlations Between Three Locus of Control Scales[1]

	Control over Destiny	Belief in Fate
Internal vs. External Control	.11	.27
Control over Destiny		.50

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[1] All coefficients are significant at .0001 level

either the poor themselves or to some external sources that range from specific institutional inadequacies (e.g., the seniority system tends to hurt the poor) to structural injustice at the societal level (e.g., America does not give all people an equal chance). For 10 of the 13 items, respondents have to answer if they agree a great deal, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree a great deal with an explanation statement. For the remaining items, respondents have to answer forced-choice questions. The 13 items are presented as follows:

1. The poor are poor because the wealthy and powerful keep them poor;
2. People are poor because there just aren't enough good jobs for everybody;
3. With all the training programs and efforts to help the poor, anyone who wants to work can get a job these days;
4. The poor are poor because the American way of life doesn't give all people an equal chance;
5. Most poor people don't have the ability to get ahead;
6. Poor people didn't have a chance to get a good education – their schools are much worse than others;
7. The seniority system in most companies works against poor people – they're the last to be hired and the first to be fired;
8. Many poor people simply don't want to work hard;
9. Good skilled jobs are controlled by unions and most poor people can't get into the skilled unions;
10. Most poor people were brought up without drive or ambition;
11. People who are born poor have less chance to get ahead than other people/people who have the ability and work hard have the same chance as anyone else, even if their parents were poor;
12. Many poor people don't want to work hard/the poor are poor because the American way of life don't give all people an equal chance; and
13. It is the lack of skills and abilities that keep most unemployed people from getting a job/there just aren't enough jobs even for those with skills.

If statistical analyses were done using all 13 items individually, the analysis would have been exceedingly cumbersome. Because responses to individual questions tend to be unstable, results based on analysis of individual items tend to lack consistency and are often difficult to interpret. In addition, some of the items appear to be interrelated. It was, therefore, deemed advisable to subject the 13 items to a scaling procedure to see if they could be reduced to a few composite indices of explanation. It was hoped that such indices, if successfully constructed, would represent major facets of causal attribution with respect to poverty. Once again, the Napior scaling technique was used to scale the items.

First, the 13 items were factor analyzed. The results of the factor analysis are shown in Table 6.4. Both the principal factoring and varimax rotation procedures yield three factors. The first factor extracted by a principal factoring with iteration procedure suggests that most of the items share a common theme, as the great majority of the

Table 6.4 Factor Analysis of 13 Explanation Items

Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	First Extracted Factor	h^2
1. Wealthy and powerful keep poor poor	.44	.17	.03	.44	.22
2. Not enough good jobs for all	.48	.20	.12	.53	.29
3. Anyone who wants to work can get job	.60	.01	.26	.61	.43
4. American way of life doesn't provide equal chance to all	.61	.26	.07	.63	.45
5. Poor don't have ability	.02	-.40	.08	-.14	.17
6. Schools for poor are worse than others	.29	.44	.22	.50	.32
7. Seniority system works against the poor	.36	.51	.11	.54	.40
8. Poor don't want to work hard	.19	-.03	.84	.49	.74
9. Poor can't get good jobs because of union exclusion	.33	.44	.10	.48	.31
10. Poor are without drive or ambition	.15	-.43	.32	.09	.31
11. Poor have less chance/equal chance to get ahead	.40	.17	.11	.44	.20
12. Poor don't work hard/no equal chance	.48	.10	.36	.58	.37
13. Poor lack skill/not enough jobs for all	.45	-.08	.07	.37	.22
Total Variance (%)	27.60	12.70	7.70		
Common Variance (%)	66.60	23.70	9.60		

items have high loadings on this factor. The varimax rotation produces three factors, indicating that the items possess dimensionality that is additional to their common meaning. An examination of those items that have high loadings on Factor I (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, and 13) suggests that this factor, which accounts for two-thirds of the variance, pertains to the central question in poverty explanation: Is poverty a consequence of unjust social arrangements or is it a product of certain personal defects on the part of the poor? On the basis of this interpretation, we have labeled Factor I "structural vs. individualistic explanation." The four items with the highest loadings on Factor I (Items 2, 3, 4, and 12) were selected to be used in the second stage of the scaling procedure. This resulted in a composite scale called Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation Scale.

Factor II contains five items with high loadings: Items 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10. However, two of the five items (Items 5 and 10) have negative signs, even though all items had been recoded before the factor analysis was done to make them consistent with one another in terms of response direction. Diagramatically, Items 6, 7, and 9 and Items 5 and 10 appear in opposite quadrants. Also, on the basis of face validity, Items 5 and 10 do not appear to go together with the other three in terms of item contents. It is therefore decided to only consider Items 6, 7, and 9 under this factor.[7] These three items refer to specific institutional inadequacies that tend to trap the less fortunate in poverty. Unlike those items in Factor I which identify structural problems at the societal level, Factor II items refer to flaws of specific institutions: poor quality schools, an inequitable seniority system, and unfair union practices. Whereas the amelioration of institutional inadequacies is at least conceivable, one would have to overhaul the entire society in order to cure those problems identified by Factor I. We have therefore labeled Factor II "institutional constraint explanation." The three items were then scaled according to the Napior technique. Since the third factor has only one high loading item and since it accounts for less than 10 percent of the variance, no scaling of items based on Factor III was done.

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[7] A second factor analysis was done after the two "irregular" items had been removed. This factor analysis with 11 items yields two factors. An examination of these two factors shows that other than some minor changes in the loadings of some of the items, the two factors are similar to Factors I and II obtained in the first factor analysis.

STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

A number of statistical techniques will be employed to test the hypotheses. A brief discussion of these statistical techniques will be provided in this section. To test Hypothesis I, correlation analysis will be used to see if relationships exist between family income, education, and socioeconomic status on the one hand and explanations of poverty on the other. Like Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 makes predictions regarding the relationship between social structure and attribution, but the statistical techniques required for testing this hypothesis are quite different. Since Hypothesis II involves six groups, oneway analysis of variance will be used to see if there are statistically significant differences between the groups with respect to the general tendencies in the way they explain poverty. In addition, *a priori* contrast tests will be performed. The fact that an analysis of variance reveals a significant group effect merely indicates that the mean of at least one of the groups is different from the grand mean, after appropriate adjustments are made. What one would usually like to know is how the groups differ from each other. An *a priori* contrast test is a systematic procedure for comparing all possible pairs of group means. The "least-significant difference" test with an alpha of 0.01 is used (Nie et al., 1975).

Similar analyses will be performed to test Hypothesis 3. Correlation analysis will first be used to examine the relationships between income, education, and socioeconomic status on the one hand and the ideology variables on the other. Analysis of variance and *a priori* contrast tests will then be used to examine how the groups differ with respect to ideology. To test if there are relationships between ideology and explanation (Hypothesis 4), correlation analysis will be used.

The testing of Hypothesis 5 will be more complicated because it involves three sets of variables, those focussed on social structure, ideology, and explanations of poverty, in a postulated causal sequence. The most important aspect of this hypothesis is the argument that ideology mediates between social structure and attribution. One way to determine if ideology is in fact the intervening factor is to hold it constant and see if the partial associations between social structure and attribution disappear or are reduced. One problem with this method is that, since it is based on the inspection of each of the partial relationships, it is often difficult to tell clearly if the relationship has been reduced and by how much, particularly when the intervening variable or variables yield a large number of partial associations. Rosenberg (1962) has introduced the test factor standardization method to provide a summary measure of the effect of the control variable(s). It enables one to show in a single table the original uncontrolled relationship between the independent and dependent variables and the relationship when one or more intervening variables are held constant. This technique will be used to see if the original relationships between the six identified groups and explanations of poverty would be attenuated when the ideology variables are held constant, either singly or jointly. If the relationships are reduced, one may conclude that ideology is a mediating factor.

It is highly unlikely that the original relationships will completely disappear when ideology is held constant. When both social structure and ideology impinge on attribution, the standardization technique cannot determine the relative importance of these two sources of influence on attribution. As well, it is often difficult to assess the combined effects of the different ideology variables. This is because when too many intervening variables are introduced simultaneously, some of the columns in the partial association tables may contain no cases, rendering the standardization procedure unfeasible. To overcome these difficulties, it is proposed to carry out an additional test: dummy variable path analysis. The six identified groups are coded as dummy variables; the dependent variable in the path analysis is the explanation of poverty; and the mediating factors are the four ideology variables. The causal model stipulates that the dummy variables influence explanation both directly and indirectly through the ideology variables. Two such analyses will be done, one using structural vs. individualistic explanation as the dependent variable, the other using institutional constraint explanation as the dependent variable. Path analysis enables us to assess the direct effects of the six identified groups on explanation, the effects of the six groups on explanation via the ideology variables, and the independent effects of the ideology variables on explanation. Thus, the path analyses supplement the standardization tests in assessing the role of ideology as a mediating factor between social structure and attribution.

Finally, the hypothesis that internal-external locus of control is an intervening variable between social structure and attribution is tested by means of Rosenberg's

(1962) test factor standardization. The purpose of this test is to see if the original relationship between social structure and attribution is attenuated when locus of control is standardized.

VII. FINDINGS

Empirical findings will be presented in four sections in this chapter: the structural determinants of attribution; interrelationships between social structure, ideology, and explanations of poverty; ideology as a mediating factor; and locus of control as a competing mediating factor. These four sections correspond to the analytic scheme proposed in Chapter V and the hypotheses tested are grouped under these four sections. As has been pointed out, for a number of tests, parallel sets of analysis have been carried out, using both the "restricted criterion" groups and the "broadened criterion" groups. But for the sake of conciseness, only findings from the "restricted criterion" groups will be reported in detail, unless the two parallel sets of analysis reveal markedly different results.

STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF ATTRIBUTION

As the readers will recall, Hypothesis 1 states that there are no relationships between family income, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status on the one hand and explanations of poverty on the other. Educational attainment, family income, and socioeconomic status were correlated with structural vs. individualistic explanation and institutional constraint explanation. The results presented in Table 7.1 show that linear relationships between the structural variables and the explanation variables are either nonexistent or very weak. Although three of the correlation coefficients are statistically significant, the coefficients are very small. As a safeguard against drawing erroneous conclusions, education, family income, and socioeconomic status were correlated with each of the 13 explanation items, some of which were used in creating the two explanation scales. Again, only very weak relationships were detected. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is largely supported by empirical evidence.

Hypothesis 2 suggests that the relationship between social structure and attribution can be examined from a different perspective. The impact of social structure

Table 7.1 Correlations Between Structural Variables and Explanation Variables

	Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation	Institutional Constraint Explanation
Education	.02	−.01
Family Income	.15*	.11*
Socioeconomic Status	.09*	.06

* $p < .01$

on attribution can be seen as arising from the effects of various structural forces acting together. The interaction of such structural factors is represented by six specially identified groupings. Hypothesis 2 posits that these groups, because of their different structural properties, are inclined to offer different explanations for the existence of economic dependency.

Before commenting on the results of the analysis of variance and *a priori* contrast tests, it is useful to present the socio-demographic characteristics of the six "restricted criterion" groups and the six "broadened criterion" groups. A seventh group known as "others" is added in each case to facilitate comparison. The "others" is a residual category, representing respondents who are not included in any one of the six identified groups. The socio-demographic characteristics of these seven groups are shown in Tables 7.2 and 7.3.

A oneway analysis of variance was computed for structural vs. individualistic explanation, using the seven "restricted criterion" groups as the independent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 7.4. The group effect is statistically significant. As expected, the means for professionals, blacks, and students are above the grand mean, indicating that they are more likely to explain poverty in structural terms. Of these three groups, the blacks are most likely to use structural explanation. They are followed by the students. Conversely, the proprietors/farmers, upper working class, and Southern working class score below the grand mean, indicating that they are inclined to explain poverty in individualistic terms. *A priori* contrast tests were performed in order to determine how the groups differ from each other. The results are shown in Table 7.5. The blacks differ significantly from all other groups. While the professionals tend to explain poverty structurally, their "structuralism" is so mild that they are distinguishable only from the proprietors/farmers, and is clearly outstripped by that of the blacks. The proprietors/farmers are the opposite of the blacks. Their propensity to explain poverty in individualistic terms puts them apart from all other groups, with the exception of the Southern working class.

Findings with respect to institutional constraint explanation are reported in Tables 7.6 and 7.7. The blacks are more likely than all other groups, except the students, to blame poverty on institutional inadequacies. The groups least likely to explain poverty in

Table 7.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics of "Restricted Criterion" Groups

	Professionals (%)	Proprietors/ Farmers (%)	Upper Working Class (%)	Blacks (%)	Southern Working Class (%)	Students (%)	"Others" (%)
Sex							
Male	71.0	87.5	95.0	32.1	53.5	71.4	27.5
Female	29.0	12.5	5.0	67.9	46.5	28.6	72.5
Age							
25 or under	17.4	2.1	10.9	18.3	24.8	78.6	17.5
26 - 45	47.8	38.3	56.6	48.1	33.7	21.4	34.1
46 - 65	23.1	38.3	28.7	18.3	31.7	0.0	33.6
66 or over	11.6	21.3	13.9	15.4	9.9	0.0	14.7
Education							
Grade 9 or less	0.0	39.6	29.8	36.8	23.8	0.0	22.6
Grade 10 - 12	0.0	31.3	26.7	33.0	44.6	10.7	38.0
Some College	0.0	20.8	41.6	22.6	29.7	60.7	31.8
Baccalaureate	58.0	8.3	2.0	6.6	2.0	25.0	6.6
Higher Degrees	42.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.0	3.6	1.0
Employment Status							
Employed	88.4	79.2	76.2	55.7	75.2	0.0	45.1
Unemployed	4.3	0.0	4.0	4.7	9.0	0.0	3.4
Retired/Disabled	7.2	20.9	19.8	17.9	15.9	0.0	8.4
Housewives	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.9	0.0	0.0	42.8
Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	100.0	0.3
Family Income							
$3,000 or less	9.0	14.9	4.0	32.0	15.8	33.3	10.7
$3,000 - $10,000	28.3	40.4	50.5	44.7	54.5	33.3	43.5
$10,000 - $20,000	37.3	25.5	41.6	22.3	25.8	18.5	34.3
$20,000 - $35,000	16.4	8.5	4.0	1.0	2.0	7.4	8.8
$35,000 or more	9.0	10.6	0.0	0.0	2.0	7.4	2.7
No. of Cases	(N = 69)	(N = 48)	(N = 101)	(N = 106)	(N = 101)	(N = 28)	(N = 619)

Table 7.3 Socio-demographic Characteristics of "Broadened Criterion" Groups

	Professionals (%)	Proprietors/ Farmers (%)	Upper Working Class (%)	Blacks (%)	Southern Working Class (%)	Students (%)	"Others" (%)
Sex							
Male	52.0	57.3	45.3	32.1	49.1	71.4	37.5
Female	48.0	42.7	54.7	67.9	50.9	28.6	62.5
Age							
25 or under	19.4	7.4	15.3	18.3	19.8	78.6	17.8
26 - 45	50.0	37.0	43.8	48.1	33.3	21.4	31.1
46 - 65	20.4	38.2	29.5	18.3	35.1	0.0	34.5
66 or over	10.2	17.3	11.3	15.4	11.7	0.0	16.5
Education							
Grade 9 or less	1.0	29.2	24.6	36.8	28.5	0.0	23.7
Grade 10 - 12	6.1	35.4	40.9	33.0	45.5	10.7	34.5
Some College	16.3	23.2	33.0	22.6	21.4	60.7	34.5
Baccalaureate	46.9	12.2	1.5	6.6	2.7	25.0	6.1
Higher Degrees	29.6	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.8	3.6	1.1
Employment Status							
Employed	68.4	54.9	55.2	55.7	54.5	0.0	55.5
Unemployed	3.0	1.2	2.5	4.7	8.1	0.0	4.2
Retired/Disabled	6.1	12.2	10.9	17.9	13.4	0.0	11.3
Housewives	22.4	31.7	31.5	17.9	23.2	0.0	28.7
Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.9	100.0	0.2
Family Income							
$3,000 or less	6.4	8.8	4.0	32.0	19.6	33.3	12.6
$3,000 - $10,000	27.6	46.3	49.0	44.7	48.2	33.3	44.2
$10,000 - $20,000	34.0	22.5	42.5	22.3	29.5	18.5	33.3
$20,000 - $35,000	21.3	7.5	4.5	1.0	0.9	7.4	8.8
$35,000 or more	10.6	15.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	7.4	1.2
No. of Cases	(N = 98)	(N = 82)	(N = 203)	(N = 106)	(N = 112)	(N = 28)	(N = 443)

Table 7.4 Summary of Analysis of Variance: Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation as a Function of Social Structure

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	1154275.78	6	192379.25	20.25*
Within Groups	9196387.44	968	9500.40	
Total	10350663.22	974		

* p < .0001

Table 7.5 Differences Among Groups with Respect to Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation

Mean#	Group	A	B	C	D	E	F
141.90	Proprietors/Farmers (A)						
180.55	Southern Working Class (B)						
185.69	"Others" (C)	*					
192.04	Upper Working Class (D)	*					
204.85	Professionals (E)	*					
236.79	Students (F)	*	*	*			
294.78	Blacks (G)	*	*	*	*	*	*

# Grand Mean = 196.99

* Denotes pair of groups significantly different at the .01 level

Table 7.6 Summary of Analysis of Variance: Institutional Constraint Explanation as a Function of Social Structure

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	439402.14	6	73233.69	14.12*
Within Groups	4642358.50	895	5186.99	
Total	5081760.64	901		

* p < .0001

Table 7.7 Differences Among Groups with Respect to Institutional Constraint Explanation

Mean#	Group	A	B	C	D	E	F
134.38	Upper Working Class (A)						
138.75	Proprietors/Farmers (B)						
157.54	"Others" (C)	*					
162.84	Southern Working Class (D)	*					
185.69	Professionals (E)	*	*	*			
188.52	Students (F)	*	*				
218.57	Blacks (G)	*	*	*	*	*	

# Grand Mean = 163.84

* Denotes pair of groups significantly different at the .01 level

terms of institutional constraints are the upper working class and proprietors/farmers. The rejection of the institutional constraint explanation by the upper working class is not surprising in view of the fact that this mode of explanation refers to institutional obstacles blocking economic upward mobility. Two of the statements making up the Institutional Constraint Explanation Scale refer to the seniority system in companies and the fact that many poor people cannot get into skilled unions. In most cases, the beneficiaries of such practices are the skilled workers who naturally are not inclined to regard them as causes of poverty.

The results obtained from the "broadened criterion" groups are very similar to those reported above. While there are minor variations, the major trends exhibited in these two sets of analysis are more or less identical. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is strongly supported. From a simplistic Marxist perspective, one would expect that the rich and those in upper-socioeconomic statuses would tend to blame poverty on the poor themselves, and conversely, the poor and those in low statuese to blame poverty on external factors. Studies on ego-defensive attributions in social psychology also would lead one to make such predictions. But the present analysis reveals a very different picture. In terms of economic well-being, the professionals are better off than or closely resemble the proprietors/farmers (see Tables 7.2 and 7.3). But the former consistently differ from the latter in the way poverty is causally interpreted. The professionals tend to blame poverty on the existing social and economic order, of which, they, like the proprietors/farmers, are the beneficiaries. Conversely, while the Southern working class whites are almost as much the victims of the socioeconomic system as the blacks, their attributions are diametrically opposite to those of the blacks. The former tend to blame the poor themselves for their plight, while the latter are much more inclined to attribute poverty to structural injustice and unsound institutional arrangements. Therefore, while unidimensional structural factors such as income, education, and socioeconomic status fail to predict the ways poverty is explained, when structural properties are conceptualized in multidimensional terms, individuals who are differentially located in the social structure do explain poverty differently.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL STRUCTURE, IDEOLOGY, AND EXPLANATION

The argument that ideology mediates between social structure and attribution may help explain the seemingly anomalous findings reported in the previous section. Before the mediating role of ideology can be ascertained, however, it is necessary to establish the relationship between social structure and ideology and the relationship between ideology and attribution. The readers will recall that Hypothesis 3 states that while there are no relationships between unidimensional structural variables and ideology, the six specially defined population groups will differ from one another with respect to ideological beliefs.

The relationship between social structure and ideology was initially tested by correlating educational attainment, family income, and socioeconomic status with belief in collectivism, belief in equality, belief in government action, and liberalism–conservatism. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table 7.8. The three structural variables generally correlate only at very low levels with the four ideology variables. The only exception is the correlation between education and belief in equality (0.23).

Another way to examine the relationship between social structure and ideology is to see if various population groups that occupy different positions in the social structure differ in their ideological beliefs. Four analysis of variance tests and corresponding *a priori* contrast tests were done to see if there were significant differences among the six groups[1] with respect to ideological beliefs. Summary data from the four analysis of variance tests are presented in Table 7.9. The mean scores of the groups on each of the four ideological measures are shown in Table 7.10.

When data from the *a priori* contrast tests are examined, it shows that, without exception, the blacks, students, and professionals are on the "liberal" side of the liberal–conservative ideological continuum; and that the proprietors/farmers, Southern working class, "others," and upper working class are on the "conservative" side of the continuum. The blacks are most likely to believe in collectivism, equality, government action, and to identify with liberalism. They are followed by the students. The proprietors/farmers and Southern working class, on the contrary, are most likely to

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[1] A seventh group, the "others," is included in the analyses to serve as a comparison.

Table 7.8 Correlations Between Structural Variables and Ideology Variables

	Collectivism	Equality	Government Action	Liberalism–Conservatism
Education	-.09*	.23*	.03	.09*
Family Income	.06	.04	.12*	-.09*
Socioeconomic Status	.04	.10*	.09**	-.05

* p < .01

** .01 < p < .05

Table 7.9 Summary of Analysis of Variance: Four Ideology Variables As a Function of Social Structure

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Belief in Collectivism				
Between Groups	10921.39	6	1820.00	13.50*
Within Groups	128101.25	950	134.00	
Total	139022.64	956		
Belief in Equality				
Between Groups	707194.60	6	117865.75	24.89*
Within Groups	4139151.25	874	4735.87	
Total	4846345.85	880		
Belief in Government Action				
Between Groups	576062.06	6	96010.31	24.46*
Within Groups	2629686.94	670	3924.91	
Total	3205749.00	676		
Liberalism-Conservatism				
Between Groups	84.29	6	14.05	9.45*
Within Groups	1122.83	755	1.49	
Total	1207.12	761		

* $p < .0001$

Table 7.10 Mean Scores of Identified Groups on Four Ideological Belief Scales

	Mean Score			
Group	Belief in Collectivism	Belief in Equality	Belief in Government Action	Liberalism-Conservatism
Professionals	52.81	132.69	135.71	3.79
Proprietors/Farmers	47.73	196.39	107.81	4.45
Upper Working Class	50.11	185.71	116.42	4.26
Blacks	59.46	97.93	207.01	3.25
Southern Working Class	49.34	200.69	112.54	4.48
Students	55.60	132.40	139.54	3.28
"Others"	48.57	173.98	116.05	4.23
ALL GROUPS	50.28	166.82	127.90	4.12

reject collectivism, equality, and government action, and to identify with conservatism. The professionals, although tilted to the liberal end, and the upper working class, although tilted to the conservative end, tend to be middle-of-the-road groups, sandwiched between the blacks and students on the one hand, and the proprietors/farmers and Southern working class on the other. Generally speaking, there are no statistically significant differences between the proprietors/farmers, Southern working class, upper working class, and "others" with respect to the four ideology variables. The blacks tend to differ significantly from all other groups, with the exception of the students. In the case of belief in government action, the blacks differ significantly from all other groups, but there are no significant differences among the other groups. Thus, with the exception of belief in government action, Hypothesis 3 is supported, although the ideology variables generally fail to make marked distinctions among the "right" leaning and intermediate groups.

Findings based on the "broadened criterion" groups reveal more or less the same patterns. In sum, the findings based on the two parallel sets of tests suggest that while there are no linear relationships between unidimensional structural factors and ideology, when social structure as a complex phenomenon is represented by groups that differ from one another with respect to a number of structural attributes, its relationship with ideology become much more evident. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is borne out by empirical evidence.

The relationship between ideology and attribution was assessed by correlating the four ideology variables with the two explanation variables. The results are displayed in Table 7.11. The coefficients are quite high, suggesting that a relationship between ideology and attribution does exist. The statistical data generally support Hypothesis 4. It is also interesting to note that the relationships between the ideology variables and structural vs. individualistic explanation are consistently stronger than those between the ideology variables and institutional constraint explanation. A possible reason for this is that structural vs. individualistic explanation contrasts macro structural problems with personal inadequacies, whereas institutional constraint explanation refers to specific institutional flaws that presumably could be remedied. In other words, it would require more ideological commitment of the respondents to explain poverty in either structural

Table 7.11 Correlations Between Ideology Variables and Explanation Variables[1]

	Collectivism	Equality	Government Action	Liberalism-Conservatism
Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation	.38	.45	.34	.39
Institutional Constraint Explanation	.30	.30	.33	.23

[1] All coefficients are significant at .0001 level

or individualistic terms than to attribute the problem to specific institutional constraints.

IDEOLOGY AS MEDIATING FACTOR

The possible mediating role of ideology between social structure and attribution was initially examined, using Rosenberg's (1962) test factor standardization technique. In the present analysis, the four ideology variables are used as test factors. The purpose is to see if the original relationships between the six identified groups and explanation of poverty will be attenuated by standardizing on the test factor(s). Wherever possible, standardization was carried out using two or more test factors at the same time, since the more test factors are introduced simultaneously, the greater the likelihood that the original relationship will diminish. Unfortunately, since some of the groups are fairly small in size, when two or more test factors are introduced simultaneously, some partial association tables contain columns with no cases. This makes the standardization procedure impossible. Therefore, in most instances, only one test factor was used at a time. The results of the six tests involving the two explanation variables are reported in Table 7.12 to Table 7.17.

Table 7.12 shows the original relationship between the six groups and structural vs. individualistic explanation, and the standardized relationship using belief in equality as the test factor. A fairly clear pattern emerges. The three groups that are more structural in perspective, namely, the professionals, blacks, and students, tend to become more like the sample as a whole when the relationship is standardized. Conversely, the three groups that are inclined to understand the etiology of poverty in individualistic terms, namely, the proprietors/farmers, upper working class, and Southern working class, become less individualistic in their explanations. Whereas the proprietors/farmers are 15.6 percentage points more likely than professionals to use individualistic explanations in the original relationship, the difference is only 5.6 percentage points in the standardized relationship. Similarly, in the original relationship, the blacks are 44.7 percentage points more likely than the upper working class to explain poverty in structural terms, the difference is reduced to 18.1 percentage points when belief in equality is standardized. This general

Table 7.12 Original Relationship Between Groups and Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Belief in Equality

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Individualistic	35.9	51.5	36.7	10.0	40.0	24.0
	(39.6)*	(45.2)	(32.6)	(21.2)	(36.0)	(36.7)
Individualistic/Structural	35.9	45.5	43.0	25.0	45.0	36.0
	(37.4)	(49.2)	(39.3)	(32.6)	(48.0)	(32.6)
Structural	28.1	3.0	20.3	65.0	15.0	40.0
	(23.0)	(5.7)	(28.1)	(46.2)	(16.1)	(30.7)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

pattern also holds true in Tables 7.13 and 7.14. For instance, in Table 7.14, when the relationship is standardized on both belief in collectivism and belief in government action, the proportions of professionals in the three explanation categories become almost identical, as if they were randomly distributed in the three response categories.

When the relationship between the six groups and institutional constraint explanation is examined, a similar pattern is discovered (see Tables 7.15–7.17). Generally speaking, when the relationship is standardized on one or two ideology variables, the professionals, blacks, and students are less likely to attribute poverty to institutional constraints; and the proprietors/farmers, upper working class, and Southern working class are more likely to see poverty as a consequence of institutional constraints. There is, however, one major exception. When both belief in collectivism and belief in government action are standardized, the proportion of professionals who accept the institutional constraint explanation increases somewhat, and the proportion of professionals who reject this mode of explanation decreases (see Table 7.17).

In general, the standardization tests show that, with some minor exceptions, when the ideology variables are standardized, the original relationships between the six groups and the explanation variables are attenuated. In some cases (e.g., with respect to the proprietors/farmers, blacks, and students) the attenuation is quite substantial. The result is that the original contrasts between the identified groups become much less noticeable. While the effects of the four ideology variables are not identical, the standardization tests generally confirm the hypothesis that ideology mediates between social structure and explanation.

The examination of the intervening role of ideology was extended beyond the standardization tests. A model which stipulates the mediating role of ideology between the six groups and explanation was tested by means of dummy variable path analysis. Path analysis not only shows whether such a model is tenable, but also provides information on the relative impacts of social structure and ideology as determinants of attribution, as well as the direct and indirect effects of the six identified groups on the explanation variable.

The path model incorporating the three sets of variables is shown in Figure 7.1. The exogenous variables are the six groups, each of which is coded as a dummy variable.

Table 7.13 Original Relationship Between Groups and Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Liberalism/Conservatism

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Individualistic	38.5	53.3	35.7	10.2	44.8	16.0
	(40.8)*	(52.9)	(32.4)	(13.2)	(40.3)	(40.3)
Individualistic/Structural	33.8	43.3	44.3	26.5	44.8	40.0
	(33.8)	(38.9)	(41.6)	(29.4)	(46.0)	(30.5)
Structural	27.7	3.3	20.0	63.3	10.3	44.0
	(25.4)	(8.3)	(26.0)	(57.4)	(13.7)	(29.3)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.14 Original Relationship Between Groups and Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Belief in Collectivism and Belief in Government Action

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Individualistic	37.0	62.1	41.0	9.4	37.0	20.0
	(33.9)*	(59.4)	(38.5)	(6.1)	(36.4)	(27.5)
Individualistic/Structural	34.8	34.5	39.3	28.1	55.6	30.0
	(32.9)	(25.0)	(39.5)	(42.4)	(58.4)	(30.5)
Structural	28.3	3.4	19.7	62.5	7.4	50.0
	(33.2)	(15.7)	(21.9)	(51.5)	(5.1)	(42.0)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.15 Original Relationship Between Groups and Institutional Constraint Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Belief in Equality

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Low	17.5	37.5	42.1	11.4	30.0	16.7
	(21.9)*	(33.3)	(34.0)	(9.0)	(26.8)	(15.0)
Medium	42.1	46.9	46.1	25.3	40.0	45.8
	(40.8)	(46.7)	(56.7)	(41.0)	(42.0)	(54.4)
High	40.4	15.7	11.8	63.3	30.0	37.5
	(37.3)	(20.0)	(9.3)	(50.0)	(31.2)	(30.6)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.16 Original Relationship Between Groups and Institutional Constraint Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Liberalism-Conservatism

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Low	17.5	34.5	47.7	13.7	34.5	16.7
	(20.5)*	(31.8)	(49.1)	(11.3)	(27.5)	(13.3)
Medium	42.1	51.7	41.5	21.6	37.9	45.8
	(40.7)	(52.7)	(40.6)	(25.8)	(44.4)	(60.0)
High	40.4	13.8	10.8	64.7	27.6	37.5
	(38.8)	(15.5)	(10.2)	(62.9)	(28.1)	(26.7)

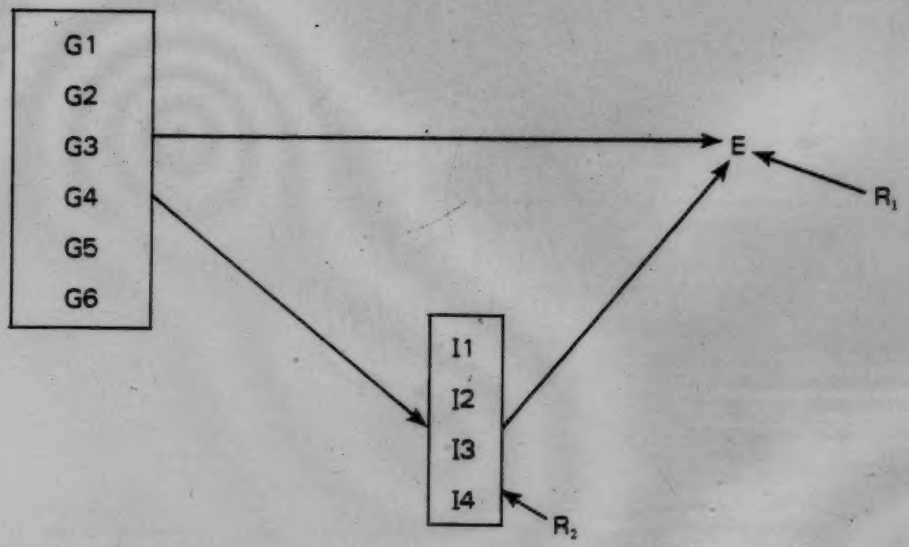
* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.17 Original Relationship Between Groups and Institutional Constraint Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Belief in Collectivism and Belief in Government Action

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Low	14.6	36.0	47.3	10.9	36.5	15.8
	(11.7)*	(38.9)	(44.4)	(14.4)	(32.3)	(22.7)
Medium	43.9	52.0	36.4	25.0	36.5	42.1
	(37.1)	(36.9)	(37.5)	(32.6)	(47.1)	(44.7)
High	41.5	12.0	16.4	64.1	26.9	42.1
	(51.2)	(24.3)	(18.1)	(53.0)	(20.6)	(32.7)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Figure 7.1 Path Model



G1: Professionals
G2: Proprietors/Farmers
G3: Upper Working Class
G4: Blacks
G5: Southern Working Class
G6: Students
I1: Belief in Collectivism
I2: Belief in Equality
I3: Belief in Government Action
I4: Liberalism–Conservatism

E: Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation or Institutional Constraint Explanation

R: Residual

The mediating factors are the four ideology variables. The dependent variable is the explanation of poverty. Each of the six groups impinges on each of the four ideology variables, as well as on explanation. Similarly, each of the four ideology variables impinges on explanation. The correlations among the exogenous variables are unanalyzed. In an elaborate path model diagram, double-headed curved arrows would have been shown to link all possible pairs of identified groups. Likewise, the four ideology variables are intercorrelated, but no causal linkages are posited among the ideology variables. The following four path analyses were done:

1. Using the "restricted criterion" groups as exogenous variables and structural vs. individualistic explanation as dependent variable;
2. Using the "restricted criterion" groups as exogenous variables and institutional constraint explanation as dependent variable;
3. Using the "broadened criterion" groups as exogenous variables and structural vs. individualistic explanation as dependent variable; and
4. Using the "broadened criterion" groups as exogenous variables and institutional constraint explanation as dependent variable.

Only the first two test will be discussed in detail. The pertinent data are reported in Table 7.18 to Table 7.21. The correlation matrices, means, and standard deviations for these two tests are displayed in Tables 7.18 and 7.20. Tables 7.19 and 7.21 report the results of the two path analyses.

Generally speaking, the impact of the six groups on the explanation variables and the ideology variables are weak, as indicated by the beta coefficients. Only the blacks and the students have somewhat stronger effects. A number of the coefficients are not statistically significant, but no attempts were made to have insignificant paths dropped from each equation and to have the model in reduced form reestimated. It is our belief that the model is basically sound and that the problem of statistical insignificance is more likely due to the quality of the data. Besides, there is no theoretical basis for discarding any of the paths.

More importantly, the path analyses allow us to estimate the direct and indirect effects of social structure on attribution. This, in turn, enables us to assess the role of ideology as a mediating factor. First of all, the six groups were examined individually through path multiplication. Tables 7.22 and 7.23 present data for structural vs. individualistic explanation and institutional constraint explanation, respectively. Columns 1, 2, and 3 display the direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect, respectively, for each of the six groups on the explanation variable. The direct effect is the beta coefficient for

Table 7.18 Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations for Path Analysis #1 (N = 465)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Mean	SD
1. Professionals	-.07	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.06	.07	-.14	.05	-.11	.04	.10	.30
2. Proprietors/Farmers		-.07	-.07	-.07	-.04	-.07	.10	-.09	.11	-.08	.05	.21
3. Upper Working Class			-.10	-.10	-.06	-.00	.10	-.03	.04	-.03	.10	.30
4. Blacks				-.09	-.06	.29	-.27	.36	-.21	.30	.09	.28
5. Southern Working Class					-.06	-.09	.15	-.08	.13	-.13	.08	.28
6. Students						.14	-.10	.04	-.13	.13	.04	.19
7. Collectivism							-.43	.37	-.41	.45	1.05	1.25
8. Equality								-.41	.43	-.50	136.04	75.91
9. Government Action									-.36	.34	97.96	67.60
10. Liberalism-Conservatism										-.41	4.18	1.30
11. Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation											152.06	102.52

Table 7.19 Metric and Beta Coefficients for Path Analysis #1

Predetermined Variables	Dependent Variables				
	Collectivism	Equality	Government Action	Liberalism/ Conservatism	Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation
Professionals	.49 * (.11) #	-38.38 * (-.15)	18.92 ** (.08)	-.52 * (-.12)	-7.59 (-.02)
Proprietors/ Farmers	-.20 (-.03)	26.13 (.07)	-18.90 (-.06)	.54 (.09)	-6.81 (-.01)
Upper Working Class	.21 (.05)	17.27 (.07)	2.43 (.01)	.07 (.02)	5.44 (.02)
Blacks	1.36 * (.31)	-72.75 * (-.27)	86.95 * (.37)	-.97 * (-.21)	39.81 * (.11)
Southern Working Class	-.15 (-.03)	30.05 ** (.11)	-7.88 (-.03)	.46 (.10)	13.08 (-.04)
Students	1.10 * (.17)	-46.04 * (-.11)	22.86 (.06)	-.99 * (-.14)	30.74 (.06)
Collectivism					16.81 * (.21)
Equality					-.39 * (-.29)
Government Action					.07 (.05)
Liberalism/ Conservatism					-11.72 * (-.15)
R^2	.12	.14	.15	.10	.36

# Beta coefficient in parentheses
* p < .01
** p < .05

Table 7.20 Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations for Path Analysis #2 (N = 434)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Mean	SD
1. Professionals	-.07	-.10	-.11	-.10	-.06	.02	-.10	.01	-.07	.13	.09	.29
2. Proprietors/Farmers		-.07	-.07	[illegible]	-.04	-.07	.10	-.09	.09	-.07	.05	.21
3. Upper Working Class			-.11	-.10	-.06	.01	.10	-.01	.04	-.13	.09	.29
4. Blacks				-.10	-.06	.29	-.29	.38	-.22	.21	.10	.30
5. Southern Working Class					-.06	-.08	.14	-.07	.11	-.08	.09	.29
6. Students						.15	-.13	.05	-.14	.08	.04	.19
7. Collectivism							-.43	.35	-.42	.35	1.10	1.28
8. Equality								-.41	.45	-.31	135.39	74.51
9. Government Action									-.36	.29	97.93	67.76
10. Liberalism-Conservatism										-.22	4.17	1.30
11. Institutional Constraint Explanation											133.85	75.19

Table 7.21 Metric and Beta Coefficients for Path Analysis #2

	Dependent Variables				
Predetermined Variables	Collectivism	Equality	Government Action	Liberalism/ Conservatism	Institutional Constraint Explanation
Professionals	.26 (.06)#	-30.46* (-.12)	13.27 (.06)	-.38 (-.08)	25.41** (.10)
Proprietors/ Farmers	-.21 (-.03)	26.33 (.07)	-18.70 (-.06)	.42 (.07)	-8.86 (-.02)
Upper Working Class	.22 (.05)	16.61 (.07)	7.91 (.03)	.06 (.01)	-27.62** (-.11)
Blacks	1.31* (.30)	-73.12* (-.29)	87.77* (.38)	-1.00* (-.23)	12.85 (.05)
Southern Working Class	-.14 (-.03)	26.80** (.10)	-5.14 (-.02)	.33 (.07)	-9.27 (-.04)
Students	1.16* (.17)	-54.67* (-.14)	28.55 (.08)	-1.03* (-.15)	9.80 (.02)
Collectivism					14.06* (.24)
Equality					-.11 (-.11)
Government Action					.16* (.14)
Liberalism/ Conservatism					.75 (.01)
R^2	.12	.14	.16	.09	.20

# Beta coefficient in parentheses
* p < .01
** p < .05

Table 7.22 Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Six Identified Groups on Structural vs. Individual Explanation

	Direct Effect (1)	Indirect Effect (2)	Total Effect (3) = (1) + (2)
Professionals	-.02	.08	.06
Proprietors/Farmers	-.01	-.04	-.05
Upper Working Class	.02	-.01	.01
Blacks	.11	.19	.30
Southern Working Class	-.04	-.06	-.10
Students	.06	.09	.15

Table 7.23 Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Six Identified Groups on Institutional Constraint Explanation

	Direct Effect (1)	Indirect Effect (2)	Total Effect (3) = (1) + (2)
Professionals	.10	.04	.14
Proprietors/Farmers	-.03	-.02	-.05
Upper Working Class	-.11	.01	-.10
Blacks	.05	.16	.21
Southern Working Class	-.04	-.01	-.05
Students	.03	.07	.10

the path linking an exogenous variable with the dependent variable. The indirect effect represents the effect of the exogenous variable on the dependent variable via the mediating factors. The indirect effect of a particular group on explanation through a single ideology variable is obtained by multiplying the beta coefficient for the path linking the group with the ideology variable and the beta coefficient for the path linking the ideology variable with explanation. Since the effect of each group is mediated through four ideology variables, the combined indirect effect of a group on explanation is obtained by summing the products of the four sets of path multiplication. The total effect is the sum of the direct and indirect effects.

Data from Tables 7.22 and 7.23 show that the direct and indirect effects for most of the groups are weak, with the exceptions of the blacks and students. In some cases, the total effect is weak because the direct effect and the indirect effect have opposite signs. With respect to structural vs. individualistic explanation, the indirect effects are in most cases higher than the direct effects, indicating that much of the impact of the groups on explanation is transmitted through the ideology variables. With respect to institutional constraint explanation, the relative strengths of the direct effects and the indirect effects are less consistent. In some cases, the indirect effects are stronger than the direct effects; in other cases, the direct effects overshadow the indirect effects.

The decomposition of the total effect for each of the six groups reveals how the groups differ with respect to their impacts on the explanation variables. As the readers will recall, the six groups were identified to represent different social structural configurations. Similarly, the ideology variables were identified to represent different dimensions of an ideological complex. Thus, it would be useful to examine not only the effects of the components but also the aggregate effects of social structure and ideology. This requires a reexamination of the multiple regression equations. When structural vs. individualistic explanation was regressed on the six groups and the four ideology variables, 35.8 percent of the variance in the dependent variable was accounted for. When structural vs. individualistic explanation was regressed on the six groups, the six dummy variables explained 11.1 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Similarly, the four ideology variables together accounted for 34.3 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Thus, the **unique** impact of social structure on structural vs. individualistic explanation is 1.5 percent (i.e., 35.8% – 34.3%). In other words, of the 11.1 percent of the variance in the dependent variable accounted for by social structure, only 1.5 percent is unique; the other 9.6 percent is mediated through ideology. Similarly, the **unique** impact of ideology on structural vs. individualistic explanation is 24.7 percent (i.e., 35.8% – 11.1%). That is, of the 34.3 percent of the variance accounted for by ideology, only 24.7 percent is uniquely contributed by ideology; the other 9.6 percent represents the effect of ideology as a function of social structure.

With respect to institutional constraint explanation, 19.9 percent of the variance in this variable is explained by both social structure and ideology. Social structure alone explains 8.6 percent of the variance, and ideology alone explains 17.2 percent of the variance. Thus, the **unique** impact of social structure on institutional constraint explanation is 2.7 percent (i.e., 19.9% – 17.2%), and the **unique** impact of ideology is 11.3 percent (i.e., 19.9% – 8.6%). And of the 8.6 percent of the variance in institutional constraint explanation accounted for by social structure, 5.9 percent is transmitted through ideology. Similarly, of the 17.2 percent of the variance in institutional constraint explanation accounted for by ideology, 5.9 percent is a function of social structure. Path analyses using the "broadened criterion" groups as exogenous variables were also performed. While there are some slight variations, the results of the two sets of tests are similar and comparable.

In general, we can conclude the discussion on this series of path analyses by pointing out that while the evidence on the whole supports Hypothesis 5, the empirical support is somewhat weakened by the fact that ideology is not well predicted by social structure. As expected, ideology on the whole has proven to be a powerful predictor of explanation, although certain ideological dimensions have been shown to have more predictive power than others. Also, as expected, the effects of social structure on explanation is mainly mediated through ideology. The effect of social structure on attribution which is not transmitted through ideology is minimal. Thus, the hypothesis that ideology intervenes between social structure and explanation is borne out by empirical evidence. However, the relationship between social structure and ideology is generally weak. When social structure is represented by six specially identified groups that have very different structural attributes, only the blacks and, to a certain extent, the students have large beta coefficients. The effects of the other groups are negligible. In other words, the question as to what are the determinants of ideology remains largely unanswered by the present analysis.

Some may argue that the weak linkage between social structure and ideology is due to the fact that social structure is conceptualized in the present analysis in a rather unusual manner or to the fact that interactions between social structure and ideology have not been taken into consideration. To counter such objections, we carried out further analyses. First of all, the path analyses were redone using, instead of the six dummy variables, four structural variables as exogenous variables. These were educational attainment, family income, socioeconomic status, and race (coded as a dummy variable). The results of the analyses are very similar to the results reported earlier. The coefficients of multiple determination are actually slighhtly smaller than those obtained by using the six dummy variables. This suggests that the way social structure is conceptualized makes very little difference to the outcomes of the analyses. Secondly, multiple regressions were done, incorporating all possible interaction terms between the six groups and the four ideology variables. The multiple regression equation contains 10 main effects (i.e., 6 groups + 4 ideology variables) and 24 interaction effects (i.e., 6 groups X 4 ideology variables). The coefficients of multiple determination are only fractionally higher than those obtained by using the dummy variables. Only a couple of the interaction terms actually achieve statistical significance. In other words, the interaction terms add very little to the analysis. Because these tests reveal no major differences, their results are not reported in detail in order to conserve space. It is therefore concluded that the weak linkages between social structure and ideology are not due to the way social structure has been conceptualized or the nature of the path model that has been adopted. Other explanations will have to be found, and some possible explanations will be discussed in the final chapter.

LOCUS OF CONTROL AS COMPETING INTERVENING FACTOR

The three dimensions of locus of control ("internal vs. external control," "control over destiny," and "belief in fate") were correlated with the two explanation variables. The results are presented in Table 7.24. The relationships between the three locus-of-control variables and the two explanation variables were generally not strong.

The hypothesis regarding the role of locus of control as an intervening variable between social structure and attribution was tested by means of Rosenberg's (1962) standardization technique. Tables 7.25 and 7.26 present the results of the two tests involving internal vs. external control. The data show that when internal vs. external control is standardized, there is hardly any change in the original relationships between the six identified groups on the one hand and structural vs. individualistic explanation and institutional constraint explanation on the other. The only noticeable effect of internal vs. external control as a mediating variable is with respect to the proprietor/farmer group and institutional constraint explanation. When the test factor was standardized, the proportions of proprietors/farmers in the "high" and "medium" response categories decline somewhat, and the proportion in the "low" category increases. Generally speaking, it is quite obvious that standardizing on internal vs. external control does not affect the relationships between social structure as represented by the six groups and the two explanation variables.

The effects of control over destiny are shown in Tables 7.27 and 7.28. This dimension of locus of control has somewhat stronger effects in modifying the original relationships between the six groups and explanations. When the relationship between the six groups and structural vs. individualistic explanation is standardized on control over destiny, the proportions of students in the "structural" and "structural/individualistic" categories decline and the proportion of students in the "individualistic" category increases. Conversely, the proportions of proprietors/farmers in the "individualistic" and "structural/individualistic" categories increase after standardization. The effects of control over destiny on the relationships between the six groups and institutional constraint explanation are displayed in Table 7.28. While the original relationships are affected to some extent, the changes are relatively minor.

Table 7.24 Correlation Between Locus of Control Variables and Explanation Variables[1]

	Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation	Institutional Constraint Explanation
Internal vs. External Control	.16	.08
Belief in Destiny	.20	.17
Belief in Fate	.18	.13

[1] All coefficients are significant at .01 level

Table 7.25 Original Relationship Between Groups and Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Internal vs. External Control

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Individualistic	37.4	57.8	38.0	7.8	37.3	26.7
	(37.7)*	(57.1)	(37.5)	(8.2)	(37.9)	(25.9)
Individualistic/Structural	33.5	38.9	42.5	28.4	44.5	34.1
	(32.8)	(38.1)	(42.0)	(27.1)	(44.8)	(33.3)
Structural	29.1	3.3	19.5	63.8	18.2	39.2
	(29.5)	(4.8)	(20.5)	(64.7)	(17.2)	(40.7)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.26 Original Relationship Between Groups and Institutional Constraint Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Internal vs. External Control

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Low	15.1	49.3	43.7	10.8	29.6	15.2
	(15.1)*	(41.0)	(42.7)	(9.9)	(30.6)	(15.4)
Medium	45.0	33.6	43.6	27.5	39.9	47.2
	(45.3)	(38.5)	(43.9)	(27.2)	(38.8)	(46.2)
High	39.9	17.1	12.7	61.7	30.5	37.2
	(39.6)	(20.5)	(13.4)	(63.0)	(30.6)	(38.5)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.27 Original Relationship Between Groups and Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Control over Destiny

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Individualistic	37.5	56.1	35.2	9.8	39.5	25.0
	(32.9)*	(46.3)	(34.0)	(11.6)	(41.3)	(32.0)
Individualistic/Structural	37.5	39.0	44.3	29.3	44.2	35.7
	(38.8)	(47.0)	(45.7)	(30.2)	(42.9)	(31.2)
Structural	25.0	4.9	20.5	61.0	16.3	39.3
	(28.4)	(6.7)	(20.3)	(58.2)	(15.8)	(36.9)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.28 Original Relationship Between Groups and Institutional Constraint Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Control over Destiny

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Low	16.7	41.0	41.7	8.8	31.0	18.5
	(13.1)*	(35.9)	(39.8)	(5.7)	(34.7)	(14.5)
Medium	45.8	41.0	45.2	26.3	40.5	44.4
	(47.9)	(45.0)	(45.9)	(28.1)	(37.0)	(49.4)
High	37.5	17.9	13.1	65.0	28.6	37.0
	(39.1)	(19.1)	(14.4)	(66.2)	(28.3)	(36.1)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

The effects of belief in fate as a mediating variable are shown in Tables 7.29 and 7.30. With respect to structural vs. individualistic explanation (see Table 7.29), the attenuating effect of belief in fate is fairly low. With respect to institutional constraint explanation (see Table 7.30), the intervening effect of belief in fate produces some fairly substantial changes in some of the cells, particularly in the cases of professionals and proprietors/farmers. However, the changes do not appear to be in the direction of attenuating the original relationship. There are no apparent patterns in the effects of the standardization.

All in all, with the possible exception of control over destiny as an intervening variable between the six groups on the one hand and structural vs. individualistic explanation on the other, the three locus-of-control variables generally fail to materialize as mediating factors between social structure and explanation. As has been pointed out, rival hypotheses can be generated to explain why the six identified groups differ in the way they understand the origins of economic dependency. One hypothesis is that the six groups explain poverty differently because they have different ideological beliefs. The other hypothesis is that the six groups differ in their explanations because of personality dissimilarities with respect to locus of control. Comparing the results presented in this section with those reported in Tables 7.4 - 7.7, it is quite obvious that the data tends to support the argument that ideology, not the personality factor of locus of control, is the mediating mechanism between social structure and explanation. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is generally borne out by the empirical evidence.

SUMMARY

With a few exceptions, the empirical findings are supportive of the six hypotheses. As predicted, the way poverty is causally understood is largely a function of social structure and ideology. But the relationship btween social structure and explanation depends on how the former is conceptualized. Whereas unidimensional structural variables, such as family income and socioeconomic status, fail to predict how poverty is explained, when social structure is conceptualized in multidimensional terms, as

Table 7.29 Original Relationship Between Groups and Structural vs. Individualistic Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Belief in Fate

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Individualistic	38.1	55.0	37.5	7.4	37.5	25.0
	(37.9)*	(48.3)	(38.7)	(7.3)	(37.8)	(26.3)
Individualistic/Structural	33.3	40.0	42.0	27.2	46.6	35.7
	(29.3)	(43.2)	(41.4)	(29.5)	(45.9)	(39.6)
Structural	28.6	5.0	20.5	65.4	15.9	39.3
	(32.8)	(8.5)	(19.9)	(63.2)	(16.3)	(34.1)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

Table 7.30 Original Relationship Between Groups and Institutional Constraint Explanation, and Relationship Standardized on Belief in Fate

Explanation	Professionals	Proprietors/ Farmers	Upper Working Class	Blacks	Southern Working Class	Students
Low	16.1	42.9	41.0	11.3	29.1	18.5
	(19.5)*	(34.2)	(41.2)	(9.5)	(30.8)	(14.1)
Medium	42.9	42.9	45.9	25.0	40.7	44.4
	(31.9)	(49.3)	(45.9)	(24.4)	(39.4)	(48.1)
High	41.1	14.3	12.9	63.8	30.2	37.0
	(48.7)	(16.4)	(12.9)	(66.1)	(29.8)	(37.8)

* Standardized relationship in parentheses

represented by population groups with dissimilar structural attributes, its effects on explanation become apparent. Evidence also suggests that the relationship between social structure and explanation is to a large extent mediated by the attributor's ideological beliefs. When ideological beliefs are held constant, the original relationships between structural and explanation variables are considerably attenuated. The argument that ideology mediates between social structure and explanation receives added support when it is shown that the original relationships remain largely intact when competing intervening variables, various measures of locus of control, are standardized. Two dummy variable path analyses provide further evidence to support the hypothesis. It is shown that although both structural factors and ideology impinge on explanation, much of the structural impact on explanation is mediated by ideology. However, it should be noted that the path analyses generally fail to substantiate the postulated relationship between social structure and ideology.

VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter of the thesis begins with a summary of the theoretical issues and empirical findings. Thereafter the limitations of the study and its theoretical contributions will be discussed. Lastly, some suggestions will be made regarding future research directions in this area of investigation.

RECAPITULATION

The theoretical point of departure of this study was the belief that conventional social psychological research on causal attribution had been too restrictive in perspective. Attribution research was criticized for its focus on a very narrow range of attribution behaviors even though there was considerable evidence that a variety of attributional rules and procedures might be required to explain behaviors in different realms of human activity. It was further argued that because the range of attribution behaviors considered by social psychologists was limited, the dominant psychological model that had been proposed to describe such behaviors - a logical information processing model - was also a limited one.

The present study has aimed at broadening the scope and perspective of attribution research. Instead of examining how subjects in an experimental setting explain an event or a behavior, it investigated how individuals make attributions with respect to generalized social phenomena. As well, an alternative theoretical model was proposed, which sees attribution behaviors as a function of *a priori* theories that help the utilization of information and provide intersubjectively meaningful interpretations of social reality. According to this theory-dependent model of explanation, attributions are not isolated mental products, unrelated to other cognitive elements. Instead, they are seen as a subset of a larger constellation of beliefs, values, preconceptions, and knowledge, and as an integral component of a person's overall orientation.

It was argued that this line of thinking could be pursued one step further by relating *a priori* theories to their structural or existential bases. It was suggested that the relationships between social structure, *a priori* theory, and attribution could be empirically examined in two ways. Firstly, it can be analyzed from a historical perspective. As a society evolves, with its social structure undergoing transformation, individuals' beliefs and values, which constitute potential *a priori* theories, are likely to alter as well. This, in turn, will induce changes in the way explanations are made. Thus, attributions are modified as social structure undergoes transformation. Secondly, the relationships can also be examined by studying how social collectivities that occupy different locations in the social structure differ in their *a priori* theories and attributions. It was argued that in a complex, pluralistic society, different social groups tended to espouse dissimilar values and beliefs and were therefore inclined to explain social phenomena differently in accordance with their divergent interpretations of the world. This way of understanding how individuals causally interpret social phenomena brings us one step closer to the study of attribution behaviors from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge.

Accordingly, the empirical analysis consisted of two parts: a longitudinal analysis and a cross-sectional analysis. The former attempted to trace how explanations of poverty evolved over time and how this evolution was related to structural transformations and changing ideological perspectives. The latter was an analysis of the relationships between structural factors, ideology, and explanations of poverty, using contemporary American survey data.

The historical or longitudinal analysis began with an examination of attitudes toward poverty together with their structural and ideological backdrop in the Middle Ages and in England from the fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. Then the analysis shifted its focus from the English to the American scene. The Middle Ages were characterized by a feudal society with the Church and the manorial system as the dominant social institutions. The Church's teaching was the main source of legitimation and religion provided the basis for making all aspects of the social world meaningful. The explanation of poverty in this period was mostly religious in nature. Wealth and poverty were seen as part of God's overall plan for mankind. Just as the feudal system was based on mutual obligations among the social classes, the medieval Church counselled mutual dependence between the rich and poor. Generally speaking, poverty was not considered a sin or a consequence of personal moral degradation.

The early modern period (from the fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century) both in England and in the American colonies can be seen as a transitional period. The disintegration of the medieval world ushered in major social, political, and economic changes which, in turn, generated significant alterations in ideological thinking. Because society was in a state of flux, with new economic structures and social classes emerging, the current ideologies tended to reflect this instability and uncertainty. Vying for predominance were different belief systems and ideologies: remnants of medieval beliefs, mercantilist social values, Calvinist Protestantism, and the nascent liberal thinking of the emerging capitalist class. This ideological struggle was reflected in the ways poverty was causally understood. Providential, structural, and individualistic explanations were equally common, with the first two types of explanation being more prevalent during the earlier part of this period, and individualistic explanations gaining wider acceptance toward the end of the era.

Compared to other periods in American history, the years between the American Independence and the Civil War most closely resembled the ideal society depicted in classical economics. On the one hand, the American economy was fast growing, opportunities abounded, and mercantilism was retreating. On the other hand, the concentration of wealth and industrial power had not reached the level experienced during the post-bellum era. Not surprisingly, laissez faire became the dominant ideology, emphasizing individualism, free enterprise, the sanctity of wealth, and government nonintervention. Conforming to this ideological outlook, Americans tended to blame poverty on the poor themselves. Poverty was mostly attributed to negative personal characteristics and moral depravities.

From the post-bellum era until the 1920's was a time of unprecedented economic and industrial growth in the United States. It was during this period that America became a mature and complex industrial society. The development of industrial monopoly, commercial conglomeration, class polarization, and the lessening of social mobility became evident. While classical liberalism remained the regnant ideology, counter ideologies were emerging in the form of the social gospel, the historical school of political economy, populism, and Progressivism. While explanations pertaining to personal defects were still in vogue, particularly in the first few decades after the Civil War, a trend toward attributing poverty to social structural inadequacies was very much observable.

The Great Depression brought major dislocations to American society. Many were awakened for the first time to the facts that there were major structural defects in the American socioeconomic system and that individuals were virtually powerless in the face of a national economic collapse. Also for the first time, the American mass public turned to an ideology that just a generation ago had been endorsed only by reformers, settlement workers, Progressives, and some disgruntled farmers and workers. This ideology endorsed collectivism, a general-welfare state, government intervention, and social planning. Although such ideological beliefs were not the instant product of the Depression, the economic catastrophy did precipitate a general acceptance of such ideas and ushered in the reforms of the New Deal and Fair Deal. The dominant mode of explanation during this period was structural in nature. Instead of blaming the poor for their plight, people mostly attributed poverty to social and economic factors that were beyond the control of individuals.

Notwithstanding the methodological problems associated with historical research of this kind, the analysis has provided considerable support for the argument that attribution is not an invariant phenomenon. When historical developments are examined over a long period of time, distinctive patterns of explanations with respect to poverty emerge. Although it is impossible to firmly establish causal relationships by means of such a historical analysis, we were able to show that major shifts in the way poverty was causally understood were associated with important structural transformations in society and attendant ideological changes.

The historical analysis ended with the New Deal era. The contemporary American scene was then examined from a different perspective. It was argued that if relationships between social structure, *a priori* theory, and attribution held true in a longitudinal analysis, it should also hold true in a cross-sectional analysis of contemporary American society. Applying factor analysis and Napior's scaling technique to the 1972 American National Election Study data, we were able to construct four ideology and two explanation scales. The four ideology dimensions are belief in equality, belief in collectivism, belief in government action, and liberalism-conservatism. The historical analysis in Chapters III and IV and the work of George and Wilding (1976) have shown that these ideological dimensions are generally effective in accounting for the changes in the way people in various historical periods explained poverty and in differentiating major ideological camps in contemporary Western world. The two explanation variables are structural vs. individualistic explanation and institutional constraint explanation. The former sees poverty as arising from either macro-structural inadequacies or individual weaknesses. The latter explains poverty in terms of specific institutional arrangements that tend to work against the poor.

The data analysis showed that when social structure was understood in unidimensional terms, such as income, socioeconomic status, and education, the structural effects on both ideology and explanation were minimal. However, when social structure was conceptualized in multidimensional terms, its effects became much more evident. The contemporary American social structure was represented by six identified groups (professionals, proprietors and farmers, upper working class, blacks, Southern working class, and college students) that were differentially located in the social structure. Previous research suggested that these six groups differed in their ideological outlooks; and on the basis of our theoretical arguments, it was hypothesized that the six groups should also differ in the way they explained poverty. These hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance, and they were generally borne out by the data.

Generally speaking, the blacks were most likely to endorse collectivism, equality, government intervention, and liberalism. The college students and professionals shared a similar ideological perspective, although they were less "extreme" in their beliefs. Conversely, the proprietors/farmers and Southern working class were very much opposed to collectivism, equality, government intervention, and liberalism. Upper working class members were generally in a middle-of-the-road position, although they tended to resemble the proprietors/farmers and Southern working class in ideological beliefs. With respect to causal attribution, the blacks, college students, and professionals were more likely to use structural explanation and to blame poverty on institutional constraints. Again, the blacks tended to have the most "structural" perspective. On the other hand, the proprietors/farmers, Southern working class, and upper working class tended to use individualistic explanation and are less likely to blame poverty on institutional constraints. These findings lend strong support to the argument that social structure, ideology, and explanations of poverty are closely interrelated, and that attributions in general must be understood in their structural and ideological contexts.

The second major task was to test the hypothesis that *a priori* theory intervenes between social structure and attribution. This hypothesis was initially tested by means of the test factor standardization technique. The findings were generally supportive of the hypothesis. When the ideology variables were standardized or held constant, the original relationships between social structure as represented by the six groups and poverty explanations were attenutated, and in some cases considerably. These results were contrasted with those obtained from a separate set of tests which used various measures of internal-external locus of control as personality intervening variables. When locus of control was held constant, the original relationships remained largely unchanged. The results further strengthen the contention that ideology is an important mediating factor.

A further test was performed, using dummy variable path analysis as the analytical tool. The independent variable was social structure which was represented by six identified social groups, each of which was coded as a dummy variable. The intervening variables were the four ideology dimensions. The dependent variable was either structural vs. individualistic explanation or institutional constraint explanation. The results showed that both social structure and ideology impinged on explanation. However, the effect of ideology was considerably stronger than that of social structure, and whatever the effect social structure had on explanation, it was largely mediated through ideology. While the hypothesis regarding the mediating role of ideology was confirmed, the results showed that the postulated relationship between social structure and ideology was weak.

A parallel set of tests was also performed, using identified social groups that were constituted on broadened criteria. These "broadened criterion" groups contained more subjects in most cases. They were formed according to criteria that were generally less stringent than those used in allocating sample members to the previous six identified groups. The results obtained from this set of tests were not reported in Chapter VII in order to economize on space, but they were very similar to those obtained from the set of tests based on the "restricted criterion" groups. This gives greater confidence in the soundness of the hypotheses.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The achievements of the present study, we believe, are twofold. It contributes to social psychology and to the sociology of knowledge. Regarding the former, the present investigation has provided considerable empirical support for the theory-dependent model of explanation. It has successfully demonstrated that in order to understand how explanations are made, it is important to examine the role of *a priori* theory. Meaningful explanations of non-trivial social phenomena are rarely made in an ideational vacuum. They are necessarily related to or derived from one's knowledge, beliefs, values, and world-views. *A priori* theories help the selection and processing of information, furnish intersubjectively meaningful interpretations of everyday reality, and, in certain instances, provide stock explanations for events and behaviors. It is, therefore, unproductive in most instances to try to understand why individuals make causal attributions the way they do without examining their *a priori* theories, in which most meaningful attributions are embedded.

Some may argue that we have chosen our substantive content of analysis to fit the theoretical formulation. They probably are right. It is possible that *a priori* theory is more important for the explanation of generalized social phenomena. Since the phenomenon to be explained does not refer to a discrete instance or a concrete event but is generalized and abstracted, there is no specific covariation information or "real world" referents, against which inferences could be checked. The raw data for one's attributional inferences are largely one's prior knowledge about the phenomenon - direct or vicarious experiences. Thus, *a priori* theories tend to play a more important role in shaping the attribution than in the case of a typical experimental study. It probably affects the recall of information, categorization of data, and the inferences made. However, as it has been shown in Chapter II, *a priori* theory is equally important in many other attributional tasks, although its effects are seldom explicitly acknowledged. Nisbett and Ross (1980) have likewise summarized a large number of studies which show that perception of covariation, prediction, and explanation of one's own emotional state are largely a function of preexisting theories or knowledge structure. Furthermore, the important role played by *a priori* theory is not restricted to attribution and inference behaviors. Some psychologists such as Neisser (1976) have maintained that cognitive activities in general depend upon preexisting structures or "schemata" which accept information and direct exploratory activities that make more information available. Thus, the present study is not an isolated case.

Even if the theory-dependent model of explanation were only valid for the explanation of generalized social phenomena, the present study would have made a valuable contribution by showing that different types of attribution behavior require different attributional strategies and procedures. While a logical information processing model may be appropriate for most attribution behaviors that take place in a laboratory setting, it has become increasingly clear that the information processing model is, at best, a limited one. The analyses presented in previous chapters provide added evidence that an adequate understanding of attribution behaviors requires a more comprehensive theoretical framework. The present study, however, goes beyond advocating a broader theoretical stance. It has argued the need to examine different types of attribution behavior and to adopt a variety of analytical approaches. Instead of using conventional experimental techniques and data generated in a laboratory, this study examined historical data on the changing perspectives on poverty and their social and ideological correlates. It also employed survey data to shed light on the relationships between causal attribution, ideology, and the existential base. In short, the present endeavor has demonstrated not only the necessity but also the feasibility of broadening the theoretical and methodological horizon of attribution research.

The second contribution of this research is the added evidence it has marshalled to show that ideas can only be adequately understood in their proper social contexts. The perspective of the sociology of knowledge was initially adopted to guide the exploration of the determinants of causal attributions. The empirical analysis subsequently showed that causal attribution was not an invariant phenomenon over time and across social collectivities and that explanations of poverty had both structural and ideological determinants. The sociology of knowledge, according to Stark (1977),

> ...does not involve any specious metaphysical assumptions concerning the relationship of substructure and superstructure, thought and being – least of all assumptions of a deterministic kind in the strict or technical sense of the word. All it takes for granted is that in man thought and being – individual thought and social being – form an indissoluble unity.... The task of the sociology of knowledge is merely to explore – and explore by way of realistic research, by the accummulation of analytical case-histories as it were – how close the connection between social substructure and mental superstructure in fact is, and consequently how great is the contribution which the sociological study of mental phenomena can make to the understanding of culture and its development (pp. 142–143).

If Stark's understanding of the nature of the sociology of knowledge is tenable, the present study can be seen as another "analytical case-history" that has demonstrated the close affinity between man's mental processes and his social existence.

While it was not an initial intention of this study to argue for a theoretical linkage between social psychology and the sociology of knowledge, the study does demonstrate the fact that at least with respect to the understanding of attribution behavior, the perspective of social psychology and the perspective of the sociology of knowledge are compatible and complementary. The social psychological analysis of attribution behavior tends to focus on the intra-psychic processes and the effects of the immediate environment. Even if a researcher pays special attention to the role played by *a priori* theory, he still begs the question as to where the *a priori* theory originates. A sociology-of-knowledge analysis can extend the investigation one step further by revealing the macro-structural influences on both *a priori* theories and the way explanations are made. However, a study of attribution behavior which is based entirely on the sociology of knowledge is equally inadequate because it fails to specify how structural forces affect the way individuals explain social phenomena. Otherwise put, a sociological investigation is incomplete unless it is supplemented by a psychological analysis. More on this aspect will be discussed later on.

The limitations of this study stem mainly from the nature of the empirical data used. The longitudinal analysis is based mainly on secondary source material. Critics could argue that since the analysis was not based on primary sources, the sampling of opinions regarding poverty could have been biased in favor of the proposed hypotheses. Although steps were taken to guard against possible biases, it is conceded that a more desirable approach would have been to apply content analysis to primary source material. This would have revealed the number of causal statements made in each period and the causal nature of these statements. The results could then be related to the ideological perspectives of the authors. But since the period under review covers more than a thousand years, this would have been a monumental task, entailing doing content analysis on hundreds, if not thousands, of books, documents, religious tracts, sermons, articles, letters, etc. While this is an ideal approach, it is clearly beyond the ability of a single researcher to undertake. These methodological problems notwithstanding, the differences in the patterns of explanations of poverty in different historical periods are so striking that they are unlikely to be accounted for, we believe, by unrepresentative historical data.

The cross-sectional analysis also contains problems pertaining to the survey data. As has been pointed out, the examination of the contemporary American scene was based on a secondary analysis of the data of the 1972 American National Election Study. Many of the research decisions we made were, in a sense, forced upon us because of the limitations inherent in using secondary data sources. For instance, we were able to identify only four ideological belief dimensions. Had there been more ideology items in the questionnaire, more ideological belief dimensions could have been created. Similarly, the questionnaire contains a very restricted range of explanation statements and the wordings of some of the causal statements are problematic. As a result, only two types of explanation were identified by means of factor analysis. Previous studies have shown that the range of lay explanations with respect to poverty is much broader. It would have been ideal to include fatalistic explanation, individualistic explanation not involving moral stigma (e.g., physical disability, genetic inheritance), and explanations based on the culture of poverty theory, in addition to the two types of explanations identified. Inspite of these shortcomings, the hypotheses were generally borne out by the empirical analysis. The verification of the hypotheses despite data drawbacks may be seen as giving added strength to the support for the theoretical formulation.

As pointed out earlier, the study's theoretical formulation is grounded on research findings of social psychology and the premises of the sociology of knowledge. Attributions are seen as informed by the attributors' ideological perspectives that, in turn, are shaped by the attributors' locations in the social structure. While the statistical tests show a strong relationship between ideology and explanation, the results of the path analyses show that the relationship between social structure and ideology is much more tenuous. However, it should be noted that there are indications of non-linearity in the relationships which could not have been detected by the path analysis. Moreover, other data analyses not reported in this study indicate that the four ideology dimensions combine differently for different social groups. This may also be taken to indicate structural differences in the formation of ideology. Such additional information suggests that structural factors may have more effects than the linear path model indicates. This is an area other researchers may wish to look into more closely.

It is also possible that the problem of weak structural effects is due to the nature of ideological beliefs in contemporary America. At the outset of the data analysis, we assumed the existence of significant ideological differences among various social groupings. A number of writers, however, have commented on the ideological homogeneity of American society. For example, Louis Hartz (1955), in his famous study, **The Liberal Tradition in America**, has maintained that America is essentially a Lockean society. Alternative modes of thought either are incorporated into the Lockean perspective or are isolated on the fringe of American political thinking. Therefore, American liberalism and conservatism are simply different strains within an overarching Lockean liberal tradition. Dolbeare et al. (1973) have come to a similar conclusion: "Thus, ideological conflict in the United States takes place within a relatively narrow band of the possible (or, to the rest of the world, real) spectrum of political alternatives. Our arguments are between the slightly left version of capitalism-liberalism and the slight right version of capitalism-liberalism" (p. 277). Because of this ideological homogeneity, the proportion of the population entertaining more extreme ideological beliefs, both left and right, is very small, and it is unlikely that a representative national sample like the one we used will contain many respondents with "deviant" ideological views. Because of this, even though special social groupings were identified on the assumption that they would show significant ideological differences, the relationship between social structure as represented by the social groupings and ideology turned out to be much weaker than had been expected.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Although it is a cliche to recommend that further research be done, in view of the fact that to date few attribution studies have been able to transcend the conventional social psychological perspective, more research is indeed needed. At least four areas of research are suggested.

First, the approach that relates explanation to ideology and social structure can be applied to other substantive content areas, such as crime, racial inequality, sex inequality, and mental disorder. As a matter of fact, studies similar in nature have been done in the area of crime (see Connor, 1972; McIntyre, 1967; Miller, 1973; and Radzinowicz, 1966). If studies on other substantive issues report comparable findings, this would lend additional support to the theoretical arguments advanced in this study.

Second, although we have emphasized the utility of an analytical perspective that is based on the premises of the sociology of knowledge, and although we have criticized the information processing model for being too restrictive in nature, the two approaches are in fact complementary. While studies like the present one can reveal the relationship between *a priori* theory and attribution, the psychological processes whereby attributions are derived from *a priori* theory are yet to be determined. An information processing model may prove to be useful in analyzing the nature of such processes. It could reveal the role of *a priori* theory in the processes of information encoding and organization, retrieval, integration, and response selection (Wyer, 1981). As well, psychological and sociological approaches can and should be integrated. By emphasizing the relationships between attribution and its structural and ideological determinants, we were trying to test the viability of an alternative theoretical perspective and to focus on an aspect of attribution research which has generally been ignored by social psychologists. In reality, however, attribution is likely to be a function of structural, ideological, cognitive, linguistic, and personality factors.

Third, we assumed in this study that sociopolitical ideologies constitute *a priori* theories, and on the basis of this assumption we tested the hypotheses. While most people have ideological beliefs, it is not clear if all ideological beliefs constitute the basis for making attributions. As well, it was pointed out that other beliefs, values, orientations, and world-views could also constitute *a priori* theories. It is important, therefore, to investigate, in more general terms, what constitutes *a priori* theory and which kind of *a priori* theory informs which kind of causal inference. The present study has explored a tiny corner of a potentially vast territory.

Fourth, we have identified the limitations of the present study, many of which are due to the quality of the survey data we used. It is suggested that replication studies be done, using other sources of data or using data that are specially designed and collected. In specially designed surveys, additional information could be obtained not only on the perceived causes of poverty but also on the definitions of poverty, the meaning of poverty to the subjects, and their suggested solutions. Such additional information would provide greater depth to the analysis. This hopefully will overcome some of the difficulties that we have encountered and enable researchers to pursue more in-depth analysis. In addition, since most of the historical evidence presented in Chapters III and IV is from the English speaking world, the conclusion may not be applicable to other societies. In order to strengthen the theoretical arguments, similar hypothese will have to be substantiated by studies on other cultures and societies. Thus, the present study may be seen as an exploratory effort, serving to break new research ground and to indicate to prospective investigators the potentials and possible problems in this area of research.

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